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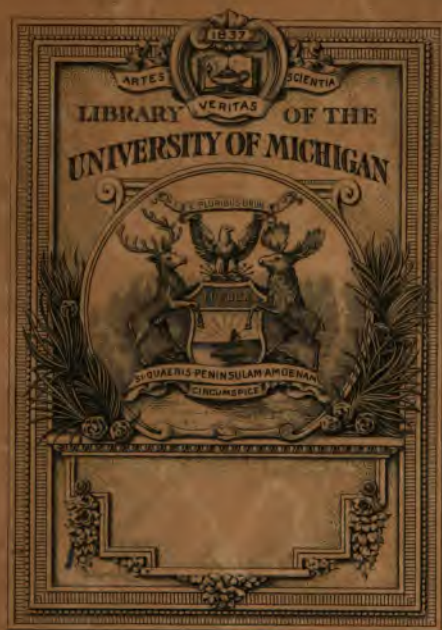
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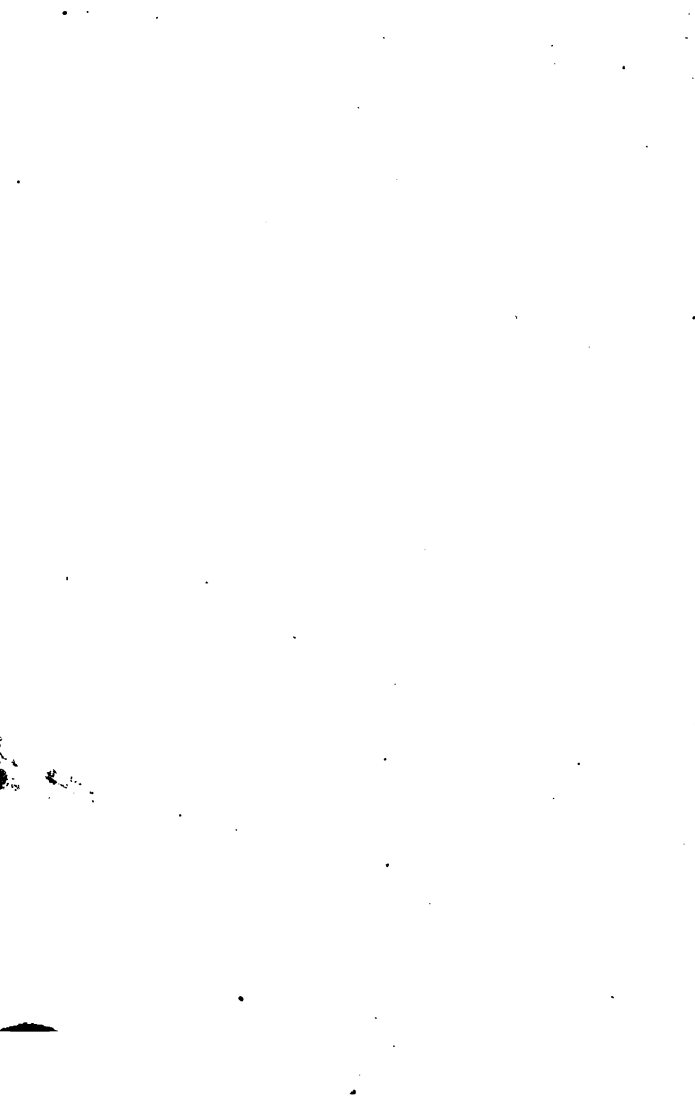
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A
BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY
OF
PHILOSOPHY.

BY
G. H. LEWES.

"Man is not born to solve the mystery of Existence; but he must, nevertheless, attempt it, in order that he may learn to know how to keep within the limits of the knowable."—GÖTHE.

"But not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
Thoughts of man are widened by the process of the suns."
TENNYSON.

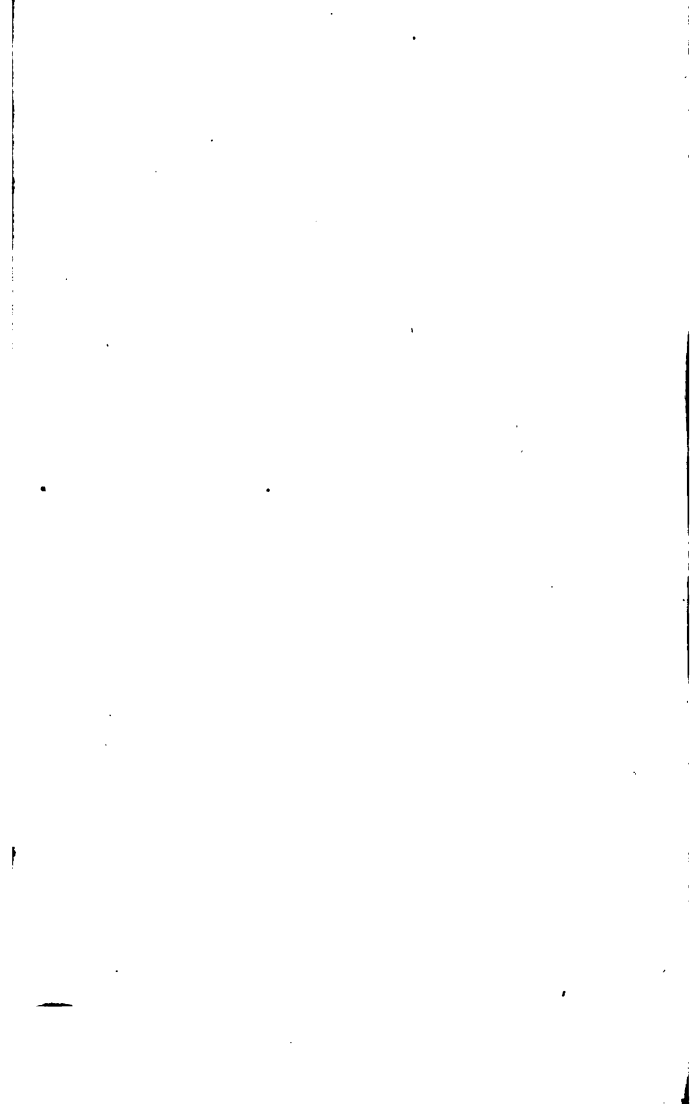
SERIES II.—FROM BACON TO THE PRESENT DAY.

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FOURTH EPOCH.

THE SUBJECTIVE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE BEING
ESTABLISHED LEADS TO IDEALISM.

CHAP. I. LIFE OF BERKELEY.

CHAP. II. BERKELEY AND COMMON SENSE.

CHAP. III. IDEALISM.

1

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF BERKELEY.

THERE are few men of whom England has better reason to be proud than of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne; for to extraordinary merits as a writer and thinker, he united the most exquisite purity and generosity of character; and it is still a moot-point whether he was greater in head or heart.

He was born on the 12th of March, 1684, at Kilcrin in the county of Kilkenny. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was in 1707 admitted as a fellow. In 1709 he published his 'New Theory of Vision,' which made an epoch in science; and the year after, his 'Principles of Human Knowledge,' which made an epoch in metaphysics. After this he came to London, where he was received with open arms. "Ancient learning, exact science, polished society, modern literature, and the fine arts, contributed to adorn and enrich the mind of this accomplished man. All his contemporaries agreed with the Satirist in ascribing

To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.

Adverse factions and hostile wits concurred only in loving, admiring, and contributing to advance him. The severe sense of Swift endured his visions; the modest Addison endeavoured to reconcile Clarke to his ambitious speculations. His cha-

racter converted the satire of Pope into fervid praise. Even the discerning, fastidious, and turbulent Atterbury said, after an interview with him, 'so much learning, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman.'**

His acquaintance with the wits led to his contributing to the 'Guardian.' He became chaplain and afterwards secretary to the Earl of Peterborough, whom he accompanied on his embassy to Sicily. He subsequently made the tour of Europe with Mr. Ashe; and at Paris met Malebranche, with whom he had an animated discussion on the ideal theory. In 1724 he was made dean of Derry. This was worth eleven hundred pounds a-year to him; but he resigned it in order to dedicate his life to the conversion of the North American savages, stipulating only with the Government for a salary of one hundred pounds a-year. On this romantic and generous expedition he was accompanied by his young wife. He set sail for Rhode Island, carrying with him a valuable library of books and the bulk of his property. But, to the shame of the Government, be it said, the promises made him were not fulfilled, and after seven years of single-handed endeavour, he was forced to return to England, having spent the greater part of his fortune in vain.

He was made Bishop of Cloyne in 1734. When he wished to resign, the King would not permit him; and being keenly alive to the evils of non-residence, he made an arrangement before leaving

* Sir J. Mackintosh.

Cloyne, whereby he settled 200*l.* a-year during his absence on the poor. In 1752 he removed to Oxford, where, in 1753, he was suddenly seized, while reading, with palsy of the heart, and died almost instantaneously.

Of his numerous writings we cannot here speak ; two only belong to our subject : the 'Principles of Knowledge,' and the 'Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous.' We hope to remove some of the errors and prejudices with which his name is encrusted. We hope to show that, even in what are called his wildest moods, Berkeley was a plain, sincere, deep-thinking man, not a sophist, playing with paradoxes to display his skill.

CHAPTER II.

BERKELEY AND COMMON SENSE.

ALL the world has heard of Berkeley's Idealism, and innumerable "coxcombs" have vanquished it "with a grin."* Ridicule has not been sparing of it. Argument has not been wanting. It has been laughed at, written at, talked at, shrieked at. That it has been *understood* is not so apparent. Few writers seem to have honestly read and appreciated his works; and those few are certainly not among his antagonists. In reading the criticisms upon his theory it is quite ludicrous to notice the constant iteration of trivial objections which, trivial as they are, Berkeley had often anticipated. In fact the critics misunderstood him, and then reproached him for his inconsistency—inconsistency, not with *his* principles, but with *theirs*. They force a meaning upon his words which he had expressly rejected; and then triumph over him because he did not pursue their principles to the extravagances which would have resulted from them.

When Berkeley denied the existence of matter, he simply denied the existence of that unknown *substratum*, the existence of which Locke had declared to be a necessary *inference* from our knowledge of qualities, but the nature of which must ever be altogether hidden from us. Philosophers had assumed the existence of substance, *i. e.*, of a

* "And coxcombs vanquish Berkeley with a grin."

noumenon lying underneath all *phenomena*—a substratum supporting all qualities—a *something* in which all accidents *inhere*. This unknown substance Berkeley denies. It is a mere abstraction, he says. If it is unknown, unknowable, it is a figment, and I will none of it; for it is a figment worse than useless; it is pernicious, as the basis of all Atheism. If by matter you understand *that* which is seen, felt, tasted, and touched, then I say matter exists: I am as firm a believer in its existence as any one can be, and *herein I agree with the vulgar*. If, on the contrary, you understand by matter that occult *substratum* which is *not* seen, *not* felt, *not* tasted, and *not* touched—that of which the senses do not, cannot, inform you—then I say I believe not in the existence of matter, and *herein I differ with the philosophers and agree with the vulgar*.

“I am not for changing things into ideas,” he says, “but rather ideas into things; since those *immediate objects of perception*, which according to you (Berkeley might have said, according to philosophers) are only *appearances of things*, I take to be the real things themselves.

“*Hylas*: Things! you may pretend what you please; but it is certain you leave us nothing but the empty forms of things, the *outside of which only strikes the senses*.

“*Philonous*: What you call the empty forms and outside of things seem to *me* the very things themselves. . . . We both therefore agree in this, that we perceive only sensible forms; but herein we differ: you will have them to be empty appearances; I, real beings. In short, *you do not trust your senses; I do.*”

Berkeley is always accused of having propounded

a theory which contradicts the evidence of the senses. That a man who should thus disregard the senses must be out of his, was a ready answer; ridicule was not slow in retort; declamation gave itself elbow-room, and exhibited itself in a triumphant attitude. It was easy to declare that "the man who seriously entertains this belief, though in other respects he may be a very good man, as a man may be who believes he is made of glass; yet surely he hath a soft place in his understanding, and hath been hurt by much thinking."—(Reid, *Inquiry*.)

Unfortunately for the critics, Berkeley did *not* contradict the evidence of the senses; did *not* propound a theory at variance in this point with the ordinary belief of mankind. His peculiarity is, that he confined himself exclusively to the evidence of the senses. What the senses informed him of, that, and *that only*, would he accept. He held fast to the facts of consciousness; he placed himself resolutely in the centre of the instinctive belief of mankind: there he took up his stand, leaving to philosophers the region of supposition, inference, and of occult substances.

The reproach made to him is really the reproach he made to philosophers, viz.: that they would not trust to the evidence of their senses; that over and above what the senses told them, they imagined an occult something of which the senses gave no indication. "Now it was against this metaphysical phantom of the brain," says an acute critic, "this ~~crochet~~ world of philosophers, and against it alone, that all the attacks of Berkeley were directed. The doctrine that the realities of things were not made for man, and that he must rest satisfied with

mere appearances was regarded, and rightly, by him as the parent of scepticism with all her desolating train. He saw, that philosophy, in giving up the reality immediately within her grasp, in favour of a reality supposed to be less delusive, which lay beyond the limits of experience, resembled the dog in the fable, who carrying a piece of meat across a river, let the substance slip from his jaws, while with foolish greed he snatched at the shadow in the stream. The dog lost his dinner, and philosophy let go her secure hold upon truth. He therefore sided with the vulgar, who recognise no distinction between the reality and the appearance of objects, and repudiating the baseless hypothesis of a world existing unknown and unperceived, he resolutely maintained that what are called the sensible shows of things are in truth the very things themselves.*

True it is that owing to the ambiguities of language Berkeley's theory does seem to run counter to the ordinary belief of mankind, because by Matter men commonly understand the seen, the tasted, the touched, &c.; therefore when the existence of Matter is denied, people naturally suppose that the existence of the seen, the tasted, and the touched is denied, never suspecting that Matter, in its philosophical sense, is the *not* seen, *not* tasted, *not* touched. Berkeley has not, it must be confessed, sufficiently guarded against all ambiguity. Thus he says in one of the opening sections of his 'Principles of Human Knowledge,' that "It is indeed *an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men* that houses, mountains, rivers, and,

* Blackwood's Mag., June 1842, p. 814, art. 'Berkeley and Idealism:' the best defence of Berkeley we have read, and written with perfect mastery of the subject.

in a word, all sensible objects, have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding." This is striking the keynote false. It rouses the reader to oppose a coming paradox.

Yet Berkeley foresaw and answered the objections which Wimpey, Beattie, Reid, and others brought forward. He was not giving utterance to a caprice; he was not spinning an ingenious theory, knowing all the while that it was no more than an ingenuity. He was an earnest thinker, patient in the search after truth. Anxious, therefore, that his speculations should not be regarded as mere dialectical displays, he endeavoured on various occasions to guard himself from misapprehension.

"I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend either by sensation or reflection. *That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence I deny is that which philosophers call Matter, or corporeal substance.* And in doing this there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it. . . .

"If any man thinks we detract from the reality or existence of things he is very far from understanding what has been premised in the plainest terms I could think of. . . . It will be urged that thus much at least is true, viz., that we take away all corporeal substances. To this my answer is, that if the word *substance* be taken in the vulgar sense for a combination of sensible qualities, such as extension, solidity, weight, &c., this we cannot be accused of taking away.* But

* An answer to Dr. Johnson's peremptory refutation of

if it be taken in the philosophic sense, for the support of accidents or qualities without the mind; then, indeed, I acknowledge that we take it away, if one may be said to take away that which never had any existence, not even in the imagination.*

"But say what we can, some one perhaps may be apt to reply, he will still believe his senses, and never suffer any arguments, however plausible, to prevail over the certainty of them. Be it so; assert the evidence of sense as high as you please, *we are willing to do the same.* That what I see, hear, and feel, doth exist, *i. e.*, is perceived by me, I no more doubt than I do of my own being; *but I do not see how the testimony of sense can be alleged as a proof of anything which is not perceived by sense.*†"

After reading these passages (and more of a similar cast might be quoted) in what terms shall we speak of the trash written to refute Idealism? Where was the acuteness of the Reids and Beatties, when they tauntingly asked why Berkeley did not run his head against a post, did not walk over precipices, &c., as, in accordance with his theory, no pain, no broken limbs, could result?‡ Where was philosophical acumen, when Berkeley, viz., kicking a stone: as if Berkeley ever denied that what we call stones existed!

* This is not well said. That substance was *imagined* to exist (as a support of accidents) Berkeley's argument supposes: it is against such an imaginary existence he directs his attacks. Perhaps he means that no *image* of substance could be formed in the mind; which no one disputes.

† 'Principles of Human Knowledge,' sections 35, 6, 7, 40.

‡ "But what is the consequence? I resolve not to believe my senses. I break my head against a post that comes in my way; I step into a dirty kennel; and after twenty such wise and rational actions I am taken up and clapt into a madhouse. Now I confess I had rather make one of those credulous fools

a tribe of writers could imagine they refuted Berkeley by an appeal to common sense—when they contrasted the instinctive beliefs of mankind with the speculative paradoxes of a philosopher, who expressly took his stand with common sense against philosophers?

Men trained in metaphysical speculations may find it difficult to conceive the non-existence of an invisible unknowable substratum; but that the bulk of mankind find it almost impossible to conceive any such substratum is a fact which the slightest inquiry will verify. We have experienced this more than once. We remember a discussion which lasted an entire evening, in which by no power of illustration, by no force of argument, could the idea of this substance, apart from its sensible qualities, be rendered conceivable.

Berkeley, therefore, in denying the existence of matter sided with common sense. He thought with the vulgar, that matter was that of which his senses informed him; not an occult something of which he could have no information. The table he saw before him certainly existed: it was hard, polished, coloured, of a certain figure, and cost some guineas. But there was no *phantom table* lying underneath the *apparent table*—there was no invisible substance supporting that table. What he perceived was a table, and nothing more; what he perceived it to be, he would believe it to be, and nothing more. His starting point was thus what the plain dictates of his senses, and the senses of all men furnished.

whom nature imposes upon, than of those wise and rational philosophers who resolve to withhold assent at all this expense."—*Reid's Inquiry*, ch. vi. sec. 20. This one passage is as good as a hundred.

CHAPTER III.

IDEALISM.

THE first step which a philosopher takes in any inquiry is a departure from Common Sense. Reflecting upon what his senses convey to him he seeks an explanation of phenomena: and it is in proportion to the care with which he analyses the facts to be explained that he is usually supposed to be free from the mere extravagances of speculation. And yet Berkeley's rigorous analysis of the facts of consciousness has obtained for him the reputation of being one of the most extravagant of speculators!

This is the problem: our senses inform us of the existence of certain sensible qualities, such as extension, colour, solidity, &c. But our reason tells us that these qualities must be qualities *of* something: they cannot exist as mere extension, colour, &c.: there must be something extended, coloured, &c. What is that something?

The solution given by the philosophers was uniformly this: *what* that substance is we can never know, because it lies beyond our apprehension; but we are forced to admit it, as a support to the qualities which we do apprehend, as a substance in which sensible qualities inhere.

So that, deeply considered, the only reason for

inferring the existence of Matter is *the necessity for some synthesis of attributes*.

Now, what did Berkeley? With very subtle perception of the difficulties of the problem, he boldly solved it by *making the synthesis a mental one*. Thus was matter wholly got rid of; it had no longer the excuse of being an inference.

The nature of human knowledge is the first object of his inquiry. "It is said that the faculties we have are few, and those designed by nature for the support and pleasure of life, and not to penetrate into the inward essence and constitution of things. Besides the mind of man being finite when it treats of things which partake of infinity, it is not to be wondered at if it run into absurdities and contradictions, out of which it is impossible it should ever extricate itself, it being of the nature of infinite not to be comprehended by that which is finite."

This is plainly enough launched at Locke; but the worthy Bishop has no such disposition "to sit down in quiet ignorance." He suspects that "we may be too partial in placing the fault originally in our faculties, and not rather in the wrong use we make of them." He believes that God is too bountiful not to have placed knowledge within our reach, of which he has given us the desire. Forgetting here the lesson man was taught in Paradise, where the Tree of Knowledge was placed within his reach, but the fruits thereof forbidden him. "Upon the whole," continues Berkeley, "I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, the difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely

owing to ourselves. That we have first raised a dust, and then complain we cannot see."

The pretension on which all philosophy is founded is here openly proclaimed. The consequences of Locke's doctrine are rejected; the premises are retained. Berkeley's account of the origin of knowledge is the same as Locke's, only somewhat more explicitly defined. "It is evident to any one who takes a survey of the objects of human knowledge that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the senses, or else such as are perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind; or, lastly, ideas formed by help of memory and imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the aforesaid ways."

Remark, firstly, that the *objects* of knowledge are said to be *ideas*. This has a paradoxical air to those unaccustomed to metaphysics, yet it is the simple expression of the facts of consciousness. All the mind can be conversant about is obviously its ideas: we are conscious of changes that take place in our minds. Such is the fact. Whether these ideas are the *copies* or *representatives* of any *things*—whether changes in our state are to be attributed to any external *cause*: this is a question of philosophy—a question which common sense makes no scruple of begging. You see before you a flower, and you assume that an external thing resembling that flower exists, and that your sensation is produced by it, as an object produces a reflection of itself in a mirror. This is the ordinary opinion. But dive deeper into consciousness; interrogate yourself, and you will find that the comparison of

the mirror is an assumption made only to *explain* the facts of consciousness, not given *in* those facts. Moreover, granting the assumption, you will then make the mind *immediately* conversant with its ideas *only*; for assuming that objects reflect themselves in the mirror, the mirror itself knows only the reflections: these it knows *immediately*; the objects it knows *mediately*, *i. e.*, through the reflections. Thus is Berkeley keeping rigorously to the facts of consciousness when he says that the "objects of knowledge are ideas."

Secondly, remark on Berkeley's use of the word *idea*, which stands both for sensation and idea. We cannot but regard this confusion of language as the cause of no little misapprehension of his doctrines. It is well therefore to warn the reader thereof.

Now to consequences:—

"That neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor the ideas formed by our imagination, exist without the mind, is what everybody will allow; and to me it is no less evident that the various sensations or ideas imprinted on the sense, however blended or combined together (*that is, whatever objects they compose*), cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them. . . . The table I write on, I say, exists, *i. e.*, I see it and feel it, and if I were out of my study I should say it existed; meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. As to what is said about the existence of unthinking things, without any relation to their being perceived, that is to me perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse* is *percipi*; nor is it possible they should have any existence out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them."

It is in this last paragraph that the kernel of his system lies. He had identified *objects* with *ideas*: having done so, it was easy to prove that objects could not exist without a perceiving mind in which to exist as ideas. "For what are the objects but the things which we perceive by sense?" Realism assents: objects are what we perceive. "And *what*, I pray you," continues Berkeley, "do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations?" Realism is posed: certainly the mirror has nothing immediately present to it, besides the reflections. "And is it not plainly repugnant," triumphantly, continues Idealism, "that any one of these ideas, or any combination of them, should exist unperceived?" Realism has no answer to offer. It is in a dilemma from which there is apparently no escape.

The supposition of the existence of matter is founded on the doctrine of *abstract ideas* (against which Berkeley wages war). "For can there be a nicer strain of abstraction than to distinguish the existence of sensible objects from their being perceived, so as to conceive them existing unperceived? Light and colours, heat and cold, extension and figures—in a word, *the things we see and feel*—what are they but so many sensations, notions, ideas, or impressions on the sense; *and is it possible to separate, even in thought, any of these from perception?* For my part, I might as easily divide a thing from itself. I may indeed divide in my thoughts, or conceive apart from each other those things which perhaps I never perceived by sense so divided. Thus I imagine the trunk of the human body without the limbs, or conceive the smell of a rose without thinking of the rose itself.

So far I will not deny that I can abstract, if that may properly be called abstraction which extends only to the conceiving separately such objects as it is possible may really exist, or be actually perceived asunder; but my conceiving or imagining power does not extend beyond the possibility of real existence or perception. Hence, as it is impossible for me to see or feel anything without an actual sensation of that thing, so it is impossible for me to conceive in my thoughts any sensible thing or object distinct from the sensation or perception of it. In truth, the object and the sensation are the same thing, and cannot therefore be abstracted from one another. . . .

“ In a word, all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth—all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world—have not any subsistence without a mind: their *esse* is to be perceived or known, and consequently, so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind, or that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist *in the mind of some eternal spirit*. . . .

“ Though we hold indeed the objects of sense to be nothing else but ideas which cannot exist unperceived, yet we may not hence conclude they have no existence except only while they are perceived by us, since there may be some other spirit that perceives them, though we do not. Whenever bodies are said to have no existence without the mind, *I would not be understood to mean this or that particular mind, but all minds whatsoever*. It does not therefore follow that bodies are annihilated and created every moment, or exist not at all

during the intervals between our perception of them.

"I am content to put the whole upon this issue: if you can but conceive it possible for one extended moveable substance, or in general for any one idea, or anything like an idea, to exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving it, I shall readily give up the cause; I shall grant you its existence, though you cannot either give me a reason why you believe it exists, or assign any use to it when it is supposed to exist. I say the bare possibility of your opinion being true, shall pass for an argument that it is so.

"But, say you, surely there is nothing easier than for me to imagine trees in a park, or books in a closet, and nobody by to perceive them. I answer you may so: there is no difficulty in it. But what is all this, I beseech you, more than *framing in your mind certain ideas* which you call books and trees, and at the same time *omitting to frame the idea of any one perceiving them*?

"But do not *you yourself perceive or think of them all the while*? This, therefore, is nothing to the purpose: it only shows you have the power of imagining or framing ideas in your mind, but it does not show that you can conceive it possible the objects of your thought may exist without the mind. To make out this, it is necessary that you conceive them existing unperceived or unthought of, which is a manifest repugnancy. When we do our utmost to conceive the existence of external bodies, we are *all the while only contemplating our own ideas.*" *

* The foregoing passages are all taken from the 'Principles of Human Knowledge,' 5, 6, 8, 22 and 23.

This last very remarkable passage must have been overlooked by the critic in 'Blackwood' before mentioned, otherwise he would not have said that the "knot which Berkeley loosened, but which he certainly did not explicitly untie," was to be resolved, for the first time, by the arguments he there brings forward. Berkeley had untied the knot, explicitly, satisfactorily; and that too in the same way as his critic.*

The distinction between *primary* and *secondary* qualities, Berkeley easily refutes, and shows that the same arguments which make the secondary qualities to be only affections of the mind, may be applied to the primary qualities.

Having battered down almost every objection, trivial or serious, that could be offered, Idealism iterates its fundamental principle. All our knowledge of objects is a knowledge of ideas; objects and ideas are the same. *Ergo*, nothing exists but what is perceived.

Realism espies a loophole. These ideas, with which we admit the mind to be solely conversant, are but the ideas (images) of certain things: these things exist independently of being perceived, though their ideas cannot.

Berkeley foresaw this also. "But, say you, though the ideas themselves do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things like them whereof they are copies or resemblances, which things exist without the mind in an unthinking substance. I answer, *an idea can be like nothing but an idea*; a colour or figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure. Again, I ask whether

* *Vide* Blackwood, p. 817, *et seq.*

those supposed originals or external things, of which our ideas are the pictures or representations, be themselves perceivable or no? If they are, then they are ideas, and we have gained our point; but if you say they are not, I appeal to any one whether it be sense to assert a colour is like something which is invisible; hard or soft, like something which is intangible?" (Sect. 8.)

Realism is without a shadow of an answer. The philosophers are powerless against a theory so defended. No wonder that Idealism should have been given up as irrefutable; the weapons were not forged, or, at any rate, were not in the armoury of philosophy, which could successfully assail a fortress built on such a position. Dr. Reid's attempt we shall examine by and bye.

As far as the facts of consciousness reach, the analysis given by Berkeley is unimpeachable. The next question is one of mere inference. We are to settle whether it is a more plausible hypothesis that ideas are proximately produced in us by the mere Will of the Creator, whose will is effectuated by certain laws; or whether the ideas are proximately produced in us by external objects, which exist quite independently of us. This question, remember, is one which admits of no proof. It is not a question of fact, but of plausibility. It is not to be decided by common sense, but by analogical reasoning. Our *knowledge* extends no farther than our *ideas*. Our *inferences* can be nothing more than inferences.

Berkeley has far better reasons for his inference than his critics imagine. He could not see the force of the argument which made Matter a necessary postulate. That we *could* have sensations

and ideas without the presence of objects is manifest from the fact that we *do* often have them so, in dreams and phrenzies. If, therefore, matter is not always necessary for the production of ideas—if ideas can be sometimes produced without the presence of external objects—the pretended necessity, which alone forms the argument for the existence of matter, is done away with.

"But though," he says, "we might possibly have all our sensations without bodies, yet perhaps it may be thought easier to conceive and explain the manner of their production by supposing external bodies in their likeness rather than otherwise, and so it might at least be probable there are such things as bodies that excite ideas in our minds. But neither can this be said, for though we give the Materialists their external bodies, they, by their own confession, are never nearer the knowing how our ideas are produced, since they own themselves unable to comprehend in *what manner body can act upon spirit*, or how it is possible it should imprint an idea in the mind."

We have here the difficulty stated, which the Dualists (those who maintain the existence of spirit and matter, as distinct substances) have not been sufficiently alive to; and one which gave rise to Leibnitz's theory of pre-established harmony, and to Malebranche's theory of our seeing all things in God. This difficulty is indeed insuperable. It is all very easy to talk of the spirit being a mirror in which the universe reflects itself. Try for an instant to imagine a substance such as matter reflecting itself in, or acting upon, another substance having no one property in common with it. You cannot. Nor is this all: you cannot

even imagine two substances so distinct as matter and spirit are defined to be.

Berkeley then is right in triumphing over Realism and Dualism. Right in saying that if he were to accord them the existence of matter, they could make no use of it. The subject would remain as dark as before: matter throws no light on it. He maintains that our ideas are produced in us in conformity with the laws of Nature. These laws have been ordained by God. To suppose that matter is the mere occasional cause—the *vehicle through which the laws of nature operate*—is gratuitous. The agency of the Creator is more simple and direct. He had no need of creating laws and *also* matter, through which these laws should come into effect. He created the laws alone; they act upon us as they were destined to act, and without the superfluous aid of matter, which is a mere go-between.

Now, as a bit of inference—as a scientific hypothesis—no one thoroughly acquainted with the question, and with the data on which it was founded, can, we think, deny that this of Berkeley is many degrees superior to the hypothesis of Dualism.

While philosophers teach that there are two distinct eternal substances, which they name Spirit and Matter, Berkeley teaches that there is only *one* substance, viz., *Spirit*. With this one substance he can construct the world. According therefore to the fundamental rule in philosophy, that 'Entities or existences are not to be multiplied unless upon necessity' (*entia non sunt multiplicanda præter necessitatem*), the introduction of a second substance, viz., matter, is superfluous, or worse. Moreover, of the existence of spirit, or

thinking substance, we have irrefragable proof. Of the existence of matter we have no proof whatever: it is a mere inference; it is inferred in order to explain the phenomena—and what phenomena? those of perception—i. e., the phenomena of the thinking substance!

If then Berkeley is more rigorous in his analysis of facts, and more ingenious and plausible in his hypothesis than his antagonists suppose, shall we pronounce his Idealism satisfactory and true?

Hume said of it that it admitted of no answer, but produced no conviction. And we have met with no refutation of it. Yet, inasmuch as the irresistible belief of mankind is that objects are not dependant either upon our perception of them, or upon the perception of any other mind, for their existence—that objects exist *per se*, and would continue to exist if all minds were annihilated—Berkeley's theory never can produce conviction. Reid therefore was right in standing by this universal and irresistible belief. He was egregiously wrong, however, in supposing that he answered Berkeley by an appeal to this irresistible belief. It does not follow that a belief which is irresistible must be true. This maxim, so loudly proclaimed by the Scotch school,* is altogether trivial, and is

* Especially by Dr. Brown, who says that the "sceptical argument for the non-existence of an external world, as a mere play of reasoning, admits of no reply." The only reply he makes is that the belief is irresistible. Hume had already admitted that the belief was irresistible; the whole scope of his philosophy was to prove it both irresistible and *false*. How absurd, then, to appeal to the belief! Kant truly observes, in the Preface to his 'Kritik,' "admitting Idealism to be as dangerous as it really is, it would still remain a shame to philosophy and reason to be forced to

refuted by several well-known facts in philosophy. Thus—to take the most striking example—the belief that the sun revolved round the earth was for many centuries irresistible, and false. Why may not Berkeley have been a metaphysical Copernicus, who, by rigorous demonstration, proved the belief of mankind in the existence of matter to be irresistible and false? Reid has no answer to give. He can merely say, “I side with the vulgar;” but he might have given the same answer to Copernicus. Many illustrious men (Bacon among them) ridiculed the Copernican theory; but all the dogmatism, ridicule, and common sense in the world could not affect that theory. Why, we repeat, may not Berkeley have been a metaphysical Copernicus?

To prove that he was not, you must prove his reasoning defective; to prove this, you must show wherein his error lies, and not wherein his theory is at variance with your belief. All that your irresistible belief is worth, is that of a strong, a very strong, presumption against the truth of that which opposes it. Reid, in accepting this presumption as a proof, was in the right so long as Berkeley’s reasoning was not strong enough to overcome it; but singularly wrong in supposing that the presumption was a refutation.

It has been said again and again that Berkeley is irrefutable, if his theory of knowledge be admitted. We should say that he was irrefutable, if the pretensions of philosophy be admitted. We do

ground the existence of an external world on the (mere) evidence of belief.” The more so as the fact of belief had never been questioned. The question was, Is the belief well-grounded?

not quarrel with his theory: we will concede him his account of the origin of knowledge. The error appears to us to lie elsewhere. It lies in the assumption that human knowledge can be anything more than the knowledge of the *changes excited within us* by objects *without us*. It lies in the assumption that whatever is true of the modifications of the sentient being, must be equally true of the causes of those modifications. It lies in the assumption that the subjective fact is also, at the same time, the objective fact, and the whole of that fact.

This assumption we have seen to be the fundamental assumption made by philosophy, without which philosophy is impossible; and the various arguments with which we have combated this assumption will have prepared the way for a ready apprehension of the following brief exposure of the fallacy of Idealism:—

Berkeley's main position is, that the *objects of knowledge are ideas, and nothing but ideas*.

The position is incontrovertible. The conclusion therefore: *all human knowledge can only be the knowledge of ideas, and of nothing but ideas*, is equally incontestable. Not less so the second conclusion: *objects being identified with ideas, and we having no idea of an object but as it is perceived, the ESSE of objects to us is PERCIPI*.

In admitting all this, what do we admit? Simply that human knowledge is not the "measure of all things." Objects *to us* can never be more than ideas; but are *we* the final measure of all existence? It was the dogma of the sophist that *Man is the measure of all things*. It should not be the dogma of the sober thinker. Because we

can only *know* objects as ideas, is it a proper conclusion that objects only *exist* as ideas? For this conclusion to be rigorous, we must have some proof of our knowledge being the absolute standard of truth; it being really only the standard of the relation things bear to our intellect.

The Idealist will say, "If you cannot *know* anything beyond your ideas, why do you infer that there is anything?"—A question not easily answered. He will moreover say, "I defy you to conceive anything existing unperceived. Attempt to imagine the existence of matter when mind is absent. You cannot; for in the very act of imagining it, you include an *ideal percipient*. The trees and mountains you imagine to exist away from any perceiving mind, what are they but the very ideas of *your* mind, which you transport to some place where you are not? In fact, to separate existence from perception is radically impossible. It is God's synthesis, and man cannot undo it."*

To this we answer, it is very true that, inasmuch as our knowledge of objects is identical with our ideas, we can never, by any freak of thought, imagine an object *apart from the conditions under which we know it*. We are forced by the laws of our nature to invest objects with the forms in which we perceive them.† We cannot therefore con-

* See this argued in a masterly manner by the critic in 'Blackwood,' before quoted.

† "When in perception," says Schelling, "I represent an object, *object and representation are one and the same*. And simply in this our inability to discriminate the object from the representation during the act, lies the conviction which the common sense of mankind has of the reality of external things, although these become known to it only through the representations." ('Ideen zu einer Philos. der Natur. Einlei-

ceive anything which has not been subject to the laws of our nature, because in the very act of conception those laws come into play. But is it not a very different proposition to say, "I cannot conceive things otherwise than according to the laws of my nature," and to say, "I cannot conceive things otherwise, *consequently* they cannot exist otherwise?" The Idealist here assumes that knowledge is absolute, not relative—that man is the measure of all things.

Perception is the *identity* (in the metaphysical sense of the word) of the ego and the non-ego—the *tertium quid* of two united forces; as water is the identity of oxygen and hydrogen. The ego can never have any knowledge of the non-ego, in which it (the ego) is not indissolubly bound up; as oxygen never can unite with hydrogen to form water, without merging itself and the hydrogen in a *tertium quid*. Let us suppose the oxygen endowed with a consciousness of its changes. It would attribute the change *not* to hydrogen, *but to water*, i. e., to hydrogen and oxygen; because it could only know the hydrogen. In its consciousness it would find the state named water (perception), which would be very unlike its own state (the ego); and it would suppose that this state, so unlike its own, was a representation of that which caused it.

In the above illustration we have used 'great

tung,' p. xix., quoted by Sir W. Hamilton, 'Ed. Rev.,' Oct. 1830.) This is indisputable, but it is only saying that our knowledge of things is subject to the conditions of knowledge; because *we* cannot discriminate between the object and the representation it is no proof that there is no distinction between them.

licence. We have also begged the question respecting the existence of a non-ego (hydrogen) apart from the Ego. Our excuse in both instances must be the right of framing one's own illustration, provided it be only used as such. We say then, that although the hydrogen can only exist to the oxygen (in the above case) in the identity of both, as water; this is no proof that hydrogen does not exist under some other relations to the *other* forces. So, although the non-ego cannot exist in relation to mind otherwise than in the identity of the two (perception); this is no sort of proof that it does not exist in relation to other beings under quite different conditions.

In conclusion, we admit, with the Idealists, that all our *knowledge* of objects consists in our ideas.

But we cannot admit that all existence is limited to our knowledge, merely on the ground that when we would conceive anything existing, we are forced to conceive it in accordance with the laws of our conceptive faculties.

We admit with the Idealists, that all our knowledge is *subjective*. But we do not admit that what is true subjectively is true objectively.

We believe in the existence of an external world quite independent of any percipient; not only because such is the obvious and universal belief, but because the arguments by which Idealism would controvert it are vitiated by the assumption of knowledge being a criterion of all existences, whereas it is only the *modification* of one class of beings. For let us understand the precise nature of the question. Idealism agrees with Realism in placing reliance on the evidence of sense; it argues, however, that inasmuch as our *knowledge* is confined

to ideas, we have no right to assume anything beyond ideas. Yet it also is forced to assume something as the cause of ideas: this cause it calls the Will of the Creator; and this is an assumption. The real dispute, therefore, should be concentrated on this point—*Which assumption is more consonant with our irresistible belief?* the assumption of an external matter *unlike* our sensations, yet the cause of them; or the assumption of a providential scheme in which our sensations are the effects of the operation of divine laws, in which matter plays no part? The answer cannot be dubious. The former assumption, as more consonant with our belief, must be accepted.

Had not psychologists so unreasonably assumed that the mind is *passive*, they would have seen the fallacies of Idealism and of Ontology long ago. Once understand that the mind is *active* in sensation, and the psychical (consequently relative) nature of all sensation and all knowledge becomes clear.

Berkeley, we believe, failed as a metaphysical Copernicus because the assumption which he opposed to the universal belief was less consonant with that belief than the assumption it opposed. Had Copernicus not started an hypothesis which, however contradictory to the senses, nevertheless afforded a much better explanation of celestial phenomena than was possible on the old hypothesis, he would not have been listened to. Berkeley's assumption, if conceded, carries him no deeper than the old assumption. Idealism explains nothing. To accept it would be to renounce an universal belief for a mere hypothesis—and an hypothesis which is not justified by its consequences.

But that he was a deep and remarkable thinker must be readily conceded; and he failed as the greatest philosophers of all times have failed, not because he was weak, but because philosophy was impossible.

Those who have followed the course of this History with attention to its *moral* (so to speak) will not fail to observe how Berkeley's Idealism is at bottom but the much decried system of Spinoza, who taught that there was but one essence in the universe, and that was Substance. Berkeley also taught that there was but one, and that one was Thought. Now call this one being what you will, the result is the same: speculatively or practically. You may have certain degrading associations attached to the idea of substance; or certain exalted associations attached to that of spirit. But what difference can your associations make with respect to the real nature of things?

One great result of Berkeley's labours was the lesson he taught of the vanity of ontological speculations. He paved the way to scepticism: the gulf which yawns at the end of all consistent metaphysics.

FIFTH EPOCH.

THE ARGUMENTS OF IDEALISM CARRIED OUT
INTO SCEPTICISM

CHAP. I. LIFE OF HUME.

CHAP. II. HUME'S SCEPTICISM.

CHAP. III. HIS THEORY OF CAUSATION.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF HUME.

DAVID HUME has written an autobiography, which has always been admired for its simplicity and modesty. As every library—we may say every house which contains books at all—possesses a copy of the ‘History of England,’ to which is prefixed this autobiography, we need not occupy our scanty space with anything more than a few dates.

He was born at Edinburgh, 26th April, 1711. In 1734 he went to France, where he composed his ‘Treatise on Human Nature,’ which appeared in 1737. It fell still-born from the press. In 1742 appeared the first part of his Essays. He accompanied General St. Clair, as secretary, in his embassy to Vienna and Turin, 1747. In 1752 he published his ‘Political Discourses,’ and his ‘Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals.’ He was appointed Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates. The command of this library suggested to him the undertaking which has long been held his greatest title to fame—the History of England. He died in 1776.

CHAPTER II.

HUME'S SCEPTICISM.

THE marvellous acuteness and subtlety of Hume have never been denied ; and his influence upon speculation has been aided as much by the alarm his doctrines excited, as by the ingenuity with which they were upheld. If Berkeley met with no refuters, Hume could meet with none. Antagonists have been compelled to admit that the sceptical reasoning was unanswerable. Perhaps it would have been more modest to have said it was unanswerable *by them*. At any rate, the dilemma in which Hume placed philosophy was one which has great interest for us.

Locke had shown that all our knowledge was dependant upon experience.

Berkeley had shown that we had *no* experience of an external world independent of perception ; nor could we have any such experience. He pronounced matter, therefore, to be a figment. Hume took up the line where Berkeley had cast it, and flung it once more into the deep sea, endeavouring to fathom the mysteries of being. Probing deeper in the direction Berkeley had taken, he found that not only was Matter a figment, but Mind was no less so. If the occult substratum, which men had inferred to explain material phenomena, could be denied, because not founded on experience ; so

also, said Hume, must we deny the occult substratum (mind) which men have inferred to explain mental phenomena. All that we have any experience of, is of impressions and ideas. The substance of which these are supposed to be impressions, is occult—is a mere inference; the substance in which these impressions are supposed to be, is equally occult—is a mere inference. Matter is but a collection of Impressions. Mind is but a succession of impressions and ideas.*

Thus was Berkeley's dogmatic Idealism converted into Scepticism. Hume, speaking of Berkeley, says, "Most of the writings of that very ingenious philosopher form the best lessons of scepticism which are to be found either among the ancient or modern philosophers, Bayle not excepted. He professes, however, in his title-page (and undoubtedly with great truth), to have composed his book against the Sceptics as well as against the Atheists and Free-thinkers. But that all his arguments, though otherwise intended, are in reality merely sceptical appears from this, that they admit of no answer and produce no conviction."

Remark that Hume's scepticism, though it reduces philosophy to a singular dilemma, viz., that of either refuting the sceptical arguments, or of declaring itself and its pretensions to be vain and baseless, nevertheless affects in no other way the ordinary judgments or actions of mankind. Much

* Locke had already shown that we are as ignorant of spirit as of substance. We know mind only in its *manifestation*; we cannot know it *per se* as a *substratum*. Hume's argument therefore had a firm foundation in philosophy. He only concluded from admitted premises.

stupid ridicule and frivolous objection have been, and probably will continue to be, brought against Hume. Reid, from whom one might have expected something better, is surprised at Hume's pretending to construct a science upon human nature, "when the intention of the whole work is to show that there is neither human nature nor science in the world. It may perhaps be unreasonable to complain of this conduct in an author who neither believes his own existence nor that of his reader; and therefore could not mean to disappoint him or laugh at his credulity. Yet I cannot imagine that the author of the 'Treatise on Human Nature' is so sceptical as to plead this apology. He believed, against his principles, that he should be read, and that he should retain his personal identity, till he reaped the honour and reputation justly due to his metaphysical acumen." He continues further in this strain, dragging in the vulgar error about Pyrrho having inconsistently been roused to anger by his cook, "who probably had not roasted his dinner to his mind," and compares this forgetfulness to Hume's every "now and then relapsing into the faith of the vulgar." *

If this was meant for banter, it is very poor banter; if for argument, it is pitiable. But as such arguments have appeared valid to a thinker of Reid's reputation, it is reasonable to suppose that inferior men may also receive them as conclusive. Hume shall therefore be allowed to speak for himself; and he shall speak in the language of that very 'Treatise on Human Nature' to which Reid alludes:—

* 'Inquiry,' Intro. i. § 5.

“Should it be here asked me whether I sincerely assent to this argument which I seem to take such pains to inculcate, and whether I be really one of those sceptics who hold that all is uncertain, and that our judgment is not in *any* thing possessed of *any* measures of truth and falsehood, I should reply that this question is entirely superfluous, and that neither I nor any other person was ever sincerely and constantly of that opinion. Nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity, has determined us to judge as well as to breathe and feel; nor can we any more forbear viewing certain objects in a stronger and fuller light upon account of their customary connexion with a present impression, than we can hinder ourselves from thinking as long as we are awake, or seeing the surrounding bodies when we turn our eyes towards them in broad sunshine. Whoever has taken the pains to refute the cavils of this *total* scepticism, has really disputed without an antagonist, and endeavoured by arguments to establish a faculty which *nature has antecedently implanted in the mind and rendered unavoidable*.

“My intention, then, in displaying so carefully the arguments of that fantastic sect, is only to make the reader sensible of the truth of my hypothesis, that all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but custom; and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive than of the cogitative part of our natures. . . . If belief were a simple act of the thought without any peculiar manner of conception, or the addition of force and vivacity, it must infallibly destroy itself, and in every case terminate in a total suspense of judgment. But as experience will suffi-

ciently convince any one that although he finds no error in my arguments, yet he still continues to believe and think and reason as usual, he may safely conclude that his reasoning and belief is some sensation or peculiar manner of conception, which 'tis impossible for mere ideas and reflections to destroy." *

It has always struck us, as an illustration of the great want of candour displayed by Hume's opponents, that they never quoted this very significant and explicit passage; indeed, we never remember to have seen the passage quoted by any one. Let us ask what does the foregoing declaration amount to, if not to the boasted "common sense view," that our belief in the existence of matter is instinctive, fundamental? Does not Dr. Brown's admission that the sceptical argument, as a mere play of reasoning, is unanswerable, concede all that Hume requires? Does not Dr. Brown's conclusion, that we are thrown upon "irresistible belief" as our only refuge against scepticism, equally accord with Hume's explicit declaration that we *do* believe and cannot help believing, though we can give no reason for the belief?

"Thus the sceptic," Hume adds a little further on, "still continues to reason and believe, even though he asserts that he cannot defend his reason by reason; and by the same rule he must assent to the principle concerning the existence of body, though he cannot pretend by any arguments of philosophy to maintain its veracity. *Nature has not left this to his choice*, and has doubtless esteemed it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to

* 'Human Nature,' part iv. sect. i. p. 250.

our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, *what causes induce us to believe in the existence of body?* but 't is in vain to ask *whether there be body or not?* that is a point which we must take for granted in all our reasonings."

After this, let no more be said about Hume's practical inconsequences. Locke before him had clearly enough seen and signalized the impotence of the mind in any attempt to penetrate beyond phenomena, and had, with his usual calm wisdom, counselled men to "sit down in quiet ignorance."

He knew the task was hopeless; he knew also that it was trivial. God has given us the means of knowing all that concerns us, a certainty which suffices for all our wants. With that, reasonable men will be content. If they seek more, they seek the impossible; if they push their speculations deeper, they end in scepticism. It was the philosophical mission of Hume (to adopt a phrase in vogue) to show how inevitably all such speculations, if consistent, ended in scepticism.

"Men," he says, "are carried by a natural instinct or prepossession to repose faith in their senses. When they follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the *very images* presented to the senses *to be* the external objects, and *never entertain any suspicion that the one are nothing but representations of the other.* But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us that nothing can ever be present to the mind but *an image or perception.* So far, then, we are necessitated by *reasoning to contradict the primary instincts of nature,* and to embrace a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses.

But here philosophy finds herself extremely embarrassed, when she would obviate the cavils and objections of the sceptics. She can no longer plead the infallible and irresistible instinct of nature, for that led us to quite a different system, which is acknowledged fallible, and even erroneous; and to justify this pretended philosophical system by a chain of clear and convincing argument, or even any appearance of argument, exceeds the power of all human capacity.

“Do you follow the instinct and propensities of nature in assenting to the veracity of the senses? But these lead you to believe that the very *perception or sensible image is the external object*—(Idealism).

“Do you disclaim this principle in order to embrace a more rational opinion, that the perceptions are only *representations* of something external? You here depart from your natural propensities and more obvious sentiments; and yet are not able to satisfy your reason, which can never find any convincing argument from experience to prove that the perceptions are connected with external objects”—(Scepticism).

This is the dilemma to which philosophy is reduced: out of it there is no escape; and Hume deserves the gratitude of mankind for having “brought philosophy to this pass.” Mankind, however, has paid him with execration. As the whole course of this history has been occupied in tracing the inevitable result of all philosophy to be precisely this much-abused scepticism, our readers will be prepared for a different appreciation of Hume. Let us therefore endeavour to define the nature of this scepticism, which has caused such

great alarm. Scepticism, meaning doubt, and being frequently used to signify religious doubt, has alarming associations attached to it. To call a man a sceptic is to call him a heretic. And, unfortunately for Hume's philosophical reputation, he was a sceptic in religion as well as in philosophy, and mankind have consequently identified the former with the latter.

Now, philosophical scepticism can only mean a doubt as to the possibility of philosophy—in other words, a doubt only on one particular subject. If I accept the consequences to which the doctrine of Hume leads me, am I forced to suspend my judgment, and to pronounce *all* subjects uncertain? or am I only to pronounce *some* subjects uncertain? The latter is clearly the only opinion I can entertain. *What* then are the questions on which I must be content to remain in darkness? Locke, no less than Hume, has told us: All which relate to philosophy—which pretend to discuss the nature of essences and causes.*

This scepticism, the reader must acknowledge, has nothing very alarming in it, except to philosophy. It is maintained by the vast majority of thinking men—some from conviction, others from a vague sense of the futility of ontological speculation. It is only the bad passions roused in discussion which could pretend to confound scepticism with heresy.

For, let us ask, in denying human reason the power of apprehending the nature of essences and causes—in denying it the power of deciding upon the impenetrable mysteries of creation, immor-

* Comp. in vol. ii. pp. 135, 6, our answer to the ancient sceptics.

talities, "fate, foreknowledge, freewill absolute"—does the sceptic shake the foundations of religious belief?—does he in any way touch religion? Polemics angrily, but incautiously, declare that he does.

Upon what does religion base itself?—upon reason, or upon revelation? What do the Fathers teach?—what do all the highest theological authorities teach? The question is pertinent, important. Do they teach that human reason is competent to solve the problems of religion? Do they teach that to reason man must look for certitude and conviction? No: they one and all energetically declare, as they are forced to declare, that reason is essentially a finite, limited, erring faculty, wholly incompetent to produce certitude and conviction. To admit reason's competence would be suicidal. It is to some other source that we must look for certitude on such points; it is to some higher authority we must bow.*

We would merely recall, by way of illustration, the fact that the stupid deism, so widely promulgated during the last century, was proudly self-styled the "Religion of Reason!"

The philosophical sceptic, though he may also be a religious sceptic, is not necessarily so. Several names illustrious in science will at once occur to the reader, as examples of this scepticism united with fervent religious ardour.

We may, then, accept the scepticism of Hume as harmless—nay, as beneficial. It only destroys the

* It would be idle to cite authorities for this fundamental and universally acknowledged position. We should be ashamed of alluding to it, did not the present discussion force us.

now somewhat feeble pretension that metaphysics can be a science. It indicates the boundaries of inquiry. It leads us from impossible attempts to fly, to instruct us how securely we may run. It destroys philosophy only to direct all our energies towards positive science.

In the words of Göthe, "let us not attempt to demonstrate what cannot be demonstrated! Sooner or later we shall otherwise make our miserable deficiencies more glaring to posterity by our so-called works of knowledge."

Hume was a sceptic; and, consequently, early in life ceased devoting his marvellous acuteness to any of the questions agitated in the schools. His 'Essays' and his 'History' were the excellent products of this change of direction; and although he did devote a portion of the 'Essays' to philosophy, yet it was but a portion, and was only a more popular and elegant exposition of the results of his first work.

CHAPTER III.

HUME'S THEORY OF CAUSATION.

It is customary to speak of Hume's theory of causation and to bestow no inconsiderable acrimony upon him on that account. But, in the first place, the theory is not peculiarly his; in the second place, his application of it to the question of miracles, which has excited so much vehement controversy, reduces itself to "this very plain and harmless proposition, that whatever is contradictory to a complete induction is incredible. That such a maxim as this should be either accounted a dangerous heresy, or mistaken for a recondite truth, speaks ill for the state of philosophical speculation on such subjects." *

The theory may be thus briefly stated. All our *experience* of causation is simply that of a constant succession. An antecedent followed by a sequent—one event followed by another. This is all that we experience. We attribute, indeed, to the antecedent a *power* of producing or causing the sequent; but we can have no experience of such a power. If we believe that the fire which has burned us will burn us again, we believe this from habit or custom; not from having perceived any *power* in the fire. We believe the future will re-

semble the past, because custom has taught us to rely upon such a resemblance.

“When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able in a single instance to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find that the one does actually in fact follow the other. The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression from this succession of objects; consequently, there is not, in any single instance of cause and effect, anything which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion” (Essays, sect. vii.). This is the whole of his theory. His explanation of our belief in power or necessary connexion is that it is a matter of habit.

We know not whether Hume ever read Glanvill's *Sceptis Scienifica*. The title was one to attract him. At any rate, Glanvill had clearly enough stated Hume's theory. “All knowledge of causes is deductive; for we know of none by simple intuition, but through the mediation of their effects. So that we cannot conclude anything to be the cause of another *but from its continual accompanying it*; for the *causality* itself is *insensible*.” Malebranche had also anticipated it; and so had Hobbes. The language, indeed, of the latter is so similar to that employed by Hume, that we agree with Dugald Stewart in believing that it must have suggested to Hume his theory: “What we call experience,” says Hobbes, “is nothing else

but remembrance of what antecedents have been followed by what consequents. . . No man can have in his mind a conception of the future, for the future is not yet; but of our conceptions of the past we make a future, or rather call past, future relatively. Thus, after a man has been accustomed to see like antecedents followed by like consequents, whensoever he seeth the like come to pass to anything he had seen before, he looks there shall follow it the same that followed them."

No one can have any smattering of philosophy without having stumbled upon that much-debated question of cause and effect—a question considered as fundamental by all who have treated of it. To clear it from the confusions of metaphysicians would be no unworthy task. That task we will attempt. We will at all events be brief; thinking, with Hume, that "in all abstract reasonings there is one point of view which, if we can happily hit, we shall go farther towards illustrating the subject than by all the eloquence and copious expression in the world. This point of view we should endeavour to reach, and reserve the flowers of rhetoric for subjects which are more adapted to them."

Imprimis. Hume's theory sins in two respects. It is not a complete expression of the *facts*; it is not a correct analysis of the origin of our *belief*. When he says that invariable succession of antecedent and consequent is *all* that is given us in our experience of causation, he asserts that which every man who examines the matter attentively may contradict. Ask yourself whether you have not a sense of *power* also given in the experience of causation. You cannot hesitate. You believe that fire has the *power* to burn your finger—that one billiard-ball

has the *power* of moving another when impinging on it—that a spark has the *power* of producing an explosion in gunpowder. This idea of power (call it what you will) is as much given in your experience as the idea of the succession of antecedent and consequent, is given in it. Otherwise, day might be called the cause of night, because it invariably precedes it. Dr. Brown, indeed, and his followers deny this. They concur with Hume in believing our idea of power to resolve itself into mere priority and invariableness in the antecedent. We say that priority and invariableness are rather to be resolved into our idea of power. It has been objected to us by a friend, for whose opinions we have the very highest respect, that our assertion respecting power is incorrect. "I cannot," he says, "form any idea of power, except that of one event *infallibly* following another." We admit that no idea can be formed of power in one sense—i. e., no image can be framed to represent the nature of power—but the very *infallibility* said to constitute the idea of power is enough for our argument. That we should believe one event will infallibly be followed by another, is to believe that one event has the power of occasioning another.

The idea of power may be vague, if by idea we understand anything like an *image*; but it is precise enough, if we understand by it merely a conception formed by the mind. The idea of power is analogous to the idea of mind or of substance, in being thus vague but forcible. We cannot, indeed, frame an image of power any more than we can frame an image of mind; but we have a strong conviction of the existence of one and the other. Because we know power only in its effects, and

cannot separate it therefrom—because we can have no perception of causality, it being *insensible* (to use Glanvill's language), we are no more entitled to deny it, than we are entitled to deny substance because we can only perceive its attributes, not the substance itself. Hume has this note:—"Mr. Locke, in his chapter on Power, says, that finding from experience that there are several new productions in matter, and concluding that there must be somewhere a power capable of producing them, we arrive at last by this reasoning at the idea of power. But no reasoning can ever give us a new, original, simple idea; as this philosopher himself confesses. This, therefore, can never be the origin of that idea." The force of this objection lies in the unwarrantable assumption that reasoning cannot give us a new idea. But we answer by the fact that we *have* the idea of power; whence it comes is another matter.

It is useless to cavil at the word power. Call it what you will; the fact remains, that when we have had an experience of fire burning, we have the experience of the power which the fire has of burning: burning is one of the *properties* of fire. Or, to state the matter more rigorously, fire, when placed in contact with paper, produces a change in that paper; the capability of producing such a change is called power; and the fire is said to cause that change. We only *perceive* the change; but from that we *infer* the power. Just as we only perceive attributes, but therefrom infer substance.

The ordinary belief of mankind in the existence of something more than mere antecedence and consequence, is therefore a fact. This fact Hume and others omit. Because they cannot perceive the

power, they declare that we have no belief in it. Hume insists a good deal upon the impossibility of our perceiving power—of our perceiving any necessary connexion between two events: and as his theory of knowledge is confined to “impressions,” and “copies of those impressions,” it of course will not enable him to detect the fallacy; because we can have no “impression” of this power. But we say, that although we cannot *perceive* the power, we are forced to *believe* in it; and this belief is not a matter of custom, but is given in the very facts of consciousness. We perceive that *some* power is at work producing effects; the *precise nature* of this power, indeed, we cannot perceive, because we never can know things *per se*. When a spark ignites gunpowder, we perceive a power in the spark to ignite gunpowder: *what* that power is, we know not; we only know its effects. But our ignorance is equally great of the gunpowder: *what* it is we know not; we only know its appearances to us. It might as well be said that we believe in the gunpowder from custom, because we really know nothing of it *per se*, as that we believe in the power of the spark to ignite gunpowder from custom, because we really know nothing of power *per se*. We know nothing *per se*.

Now to Hume's second error. The fact being established, let it be explained. Men believe in power: is that belief well grounded?—on what is it grounded?

Two schools at once present themselves. The one (Hume) declares that the belief has no good grounds; it is a matter of custom. If I believe the sun will rise to-morrow, it is because it has always risen. If I believe that fire will burn in

future, it is because it has always burned. From habit I expect the future will resemble the past : I have no proof of it.

The other school declares that this belief in causation "is an intuitive conviction that the future will resemble the past." This is the language of Reid and Stewart. Dr. Whewell would have us admit the belief as a fundamental idea—a necessary truth independent of and superior to all experience.

Both explanations we take to be very incompetent. Custom or habit can have nothing whatever to do with it, because our belief is as strong from a single instance as from a thousand. "When many uniform instances appear," says Hume, "and the same object is always followed by the same event, *we then begin to entertain* the notion of cause and connexion. We then feel a new sentiment, to wit, *a customary connexion* in the thought between one object and its usual attendant; and this sentiment is the original of that idea which we seek for." This is manifestly wrong. One instance of one billiard-ball moving a second, suffices to originate the "sentiment," without further repetition. As to any conviction of the future resembling the past, that is assuming that the general idea precedes the particular idea. When we believe that similar effects will follow whenever the same causes are in operation—when we believe that fire will burn, or that the sun will rise to-morrow—we are simply *believing in our experience*, and nothing more. We cannot help believing in our experience; that is irresistible: but in this belief the idea of either past or future has nothing whatever to do; it does not enter into the belief. I do not believe that fire

will burn because I believe that the future will resemble the past, but simply because my experience of fire is that it burns—that it has the power to burn. Take a simple illustration, trivial, if you will, but illustrative:—A child is presented with a bit of sugar: the sugar is white, of a certain shape, and is solid; his experience of the sugar is confined to these properties: he puts it in his mouth; it is sweet, pleasant: his experience is extended; the sugar he now believes (knows) to be sweet and pleasant, as well as white and solid.* Very well; so far experience is not transcended. Some days later, another piece of sugar is given him. Is it now necessary for him to have any “intuitive conviction that the future will resemble the past”—any fundamental idea independent of experience—to make him believe that if he puts the sugar in his mouth it will taste sweet? Not in the least: he believes it is sweet, because he knows it is sweet—because his experience of sugar is that it is sweet. By no effort could he divest himself of the idea of its sweetness, because sweetness forms a part of his idea of the sugar. So we may say of the sun's rising: it is part and parcel of our idea of the sun. So of one billiard-ball putting a second in motion: our experience of billiard-balls is that they put each other in motion.

* It will perhaps seem strange that we should select sweetness as an example of causation. We selected it for its simplicity. No one will deny that the taste of sweetness is as much an effect caused by the sugar as pain is an effect caused by fire. But people are apt to overlook that causation is the operation of the properties of one body upon the properties of another. They would call sweetness a quality in sugar: but the motion of a billiard-ball they say is *caused* by another ball.

Custom has primarily nothing to do with belief. If we had only one experience of fire—if we saw it only once applied to a combustible substance—we should believe that it would burn, because our idea of fire would be the idea of a thing which burns. Custom has however, secondarily, some influence in correcting the tendency to attribute properties to things. Thus a child sees a friend who gives him an apple. The next time the friend comes he is asked for an apple, because the idea of this friend is of a man who, amongst other properties, has that of giving apples. No apple is given, and this idea is destroyed. Similarly, when all our experience of things is confirmatory of our *first* experience, we may say that habit or custom induces us to attribute certain effects to certain causes. When our subsequent experience contradicts our first experience, we cease to attribute those effects to those causes which we first experienced; and this is only saying that our subsequent experience has destroyed or altered the idea we formed at first.

Remark how much confusion is spread over this subject by the inconsiderate introduction of the word Belief. It is absurd to say that a child *believes* that fire will burn him if he puts his finger in it; he *knows* it. He will believe that it has burned some one else—he will believe in a *proposition* you make about fire, because belief is the assent to propositions: but to talk of his believing that sugar will be sweet, when he knows it *is* sweet, when he cannot think of it otherwise than as sweet, or that fire will burn when he knows it burns, is about as improper as to say that he *believes* himself cold when he *is* cold.

Only from this improper use of the word belief

could the theory of fundamental ideas, or of "an intuitive conviction that the future will resemble the past," have stood ground for a moment. If the proposition, "fire will burn paper," were put to any one, he would unquestionably believe it, because he knows it, i. e. he has no other knowledge of the fire under those circumstances. It is a proposition as evident to him that fire will burn paper as that two and two make four. Although, therefore, he may be said to believe in the proposition, "fire will burn paper," he cannot properly be said to act upon that belief when he attempts to light paper: he acts upon his knowledge. Metaphysicians argue as if the belief in any instance of cause and effect were a belief in some *implied proposition* about the course of nature. It is really a reliance upon experience; nothing more.

It is necessary to distinguish between belief in existence, and belief in propositions. It is folly seriously to say a man *believes* in his own existence, as if it were an act similar to his belief in a proposition. Belief can never take place where the contrary of what is asserted is inconceivable: there must be some possible opening for doubt, before we can call any proposition believable or not. But though a man cannot believe in his own existence, simply because it is impossible for him to conceive himself as nonexistent, he may believe that he will exist eternally, because that is a proposition the converse of which is conceivable and maintainable.

Bearing this distinction in mind, we may say that, although it is improper to speak of belief in any simple act of causation, it is not improper to speak of belief in the uniformity and universality of causation. That "fire burns paper" is an ex-

perience, not a belief. That the "law of causation is uniform and universal" *is a belief, and not an experience*: it is a *belief grounded on experience*. This is denied, indeed, by some who declare that, as our experience can never have been universal, it could never have furnished us with the belief, consequently the belief must have some higher source. This doctrine we shall examine when we treat of Kant: till then we must beg the reader to suspend his judgment.

If the foregoing arguments be admitted, the theory of Causation to which Hume has given his name must be pronounced defective. It is a theory which has excited bitter opposition on the part of theologians; it has also the honour of having first set Kant speculating on the constituent elements of knowledge; of which more anon.

SIXTH EPOCH.

THE ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE REDUCED TO SENSATION BY THE CONFUSION OF THOUGHT WITH FEELING: MATERIALISM.

CHAP. I. LIFE OF CONDILLAC.

CHAP. II. CONDILLAC'S SYSTEM.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF CONDILLAC.

ETIENNE DE CONDILLAC was born at Grenoble in 1715. His life presents nothing of interest to the biographer: it was passed in study, and was not varied by any of those incidents which give interest and romance to the biography of the humblest of men. A few facts are therefore all we shall offer the reader.

He published his first work, 'L'Essai sur l'Origine des Connaissances Humaines,' in 1746. Three years after, his 'Traité des Systèmes.' His other works followed rapidly, and established for him such a reputation that he was appointed tutor to the Prince of Parma, for whose instruction he wrote the 'Cours d'Etudes.' In 1768 the capricious doors of the Académie Française were opened to him; but having been elected a member, he never after attended any of its sittings. He published his 'Logique' in his old age, and left behind him his 'Langue des Calculs.' He died in 1780.

CHAPTER II.

CONDILLAC'S SYSTEM.

WE have seen how Idealism and Scepticism grew out of the doctrines respecting the origin of knowledge. We have now to see the growth of Materialism, or, as it is more correct to call it, the "Sensational School."

The success which Locke's name met with in France is well known. For a whole century the countrymen of Descartes extolled the English Philosopher, little suspecting that philosopher would have disclaimed their homage, could he have witnessed it. In truth, when you see Locke's name mentioned by the French writers of the eighteenth century, you may generally read Hobbes; for they had retrograded to Hobbes, imagining they had developed Locke.

We must necessarily be brief, and therefore must confine ourselves to Condillac as the acknowledged representative of Locke in France. His first work, entitled *Essai sur l'Origine des Connaissances Humaines*, appeared in 1746. At this time he had no notion of simplifying Locke by reducing all Knowledge to Sensation. He was a modest Lockeist, and laid down as the fundamental principle that "sensations and the operations of the mind are the materials of all our knowledge—materials which reflection sets in action by seeking their combinations and relations." (Chap. i. § 5.)

In 1754 appeared his celebrated work, the *Traité des Sensations*. In it he quits Locke's principle for that of Gassendi and Hobbes. "The principal object of this work," he says, "is to show how all our knowledge *and all our faculties* are derived from the senses, or, to speak more accurately, from sensations." The inclusion of "our faculties," as well as our ideas, in this sensuous origin is however due entirely to Condillac. Hobbes never thought of such a "simplification." The error is monstrous. Against it the epigram of Leibnitz, *nisi ipse intellectus*, has full force, though powerless against Locke. Nor was this a mere slip of Condillac's pen: the error is radical; it constitutes the peculiarity of his system. Speaking of various philosophers, and after quoting, with praise, the maxim attributed to Aristotle, that "nothing is in the intellect which was not previously in the senses," he adds, "immediately after Aristotle comes Locke, for we cannot reckon the other philosophers who have written on this subject [!]. This Englishman has certainly thrown great light on the subject, but he has left some obscurity. . . . All the faculties of the soul appeared to him to be innate qualities, and he never suspected they might be derived from sensation itself."

True enough: Locke never suspected such an absurdity. Because sensation calls our faculties into play, is that a reason for suspecting our faculties themselves to be derived from sensation? If we never had any sensations, we should never have any memory, for memory is the remembrance of sensations; but is that any argument in favour of memory itself being a sensation? Sensations develop our mental faculties: they do not create

them. Condillac might as well say that exercise creates the faculty men have of running. The child cannot run till he has exercised his limbs, but the exercise does not *give* him the limbs, it only calls them into action. Condillac is right in saying that we are not born with the mental faculties (a point to be touched upon hereafter), but he is wrong in saying that these faculties are nothing but sensations. Nothing but the grossest abuse of language could for an instant warrant such a notion. Condillac, who endeavoured to construct the mind and its faculties out of *transformed sensations*, never once suspected that the faculty of transformation—that *which* transforms—could not be itself a sensation. It is very easy to talk about transformed sensations; but the sensations do not, we presume, transform themselves. What is it, then, that transforms them? The mind? Not so. The mind is the aggregate of our mental states, faculties, &c.; the mind is made up of “transformed sensations,” and cannot therefore be the transforming power. We return to the charge, and demand, What is that which transforms? Condillac has no answer. All he can say is, what he says over and over again, that our faculties are transformed sensations. Hear him:—

“Locke distinguishes two sources of ideas, sense and reflection. It would be more exact to recognise but one: first, because reflection is in its principle nothing but sensation itself; secondly, because it is less a source of ideas than a canal through which they flow from sense.

“This inexactitude, slight as it may seem, has thrown much obscurity over his system. He contents himself with recognising that the soul per-

ceives, thinks, doubts, believes, reasons, wills, reflects; that we are convinced of the existence of these operations, because we find them in ourselves and they contribute to the progress of our knowledge: but he did not perceive the necessity of discovering their origin and the principle of their generation,—he did not suspect that they might only be acquired habits; he seems to have regarded them as innate, and he says only that they may be perfected by exercise.” *

This is far enough from Locke,† who would have stared to hear that “judgment, reflection, the passions, in a word, all the faculties of the mind are nothing but *sensation which transforms itself differently* (qui se transforme différemment).”

As it is curious to see how sensation transforms itself into these faculties, we will translate the Philosopher's account.

“If a multitude of sensations operate at the same time with the same degree of vivacity, or nearly so, man is then only an animal that feels; experience suffices to convince us that then the multitude of impressions takes away all activity from the mind.

“But let only one sensation subsist, or without entirely dismissing the others, let us only diminish

* ‘Extrait raisonné du Traité des Sensations.’—*Œuvres de Condillac* (1808), vol. iv. p. 13.

† It would be idle to refute here the vulgar notion of Condillac's having perfected Locke's principles; or, as M. Cousin absurdly says, of Locke's ‘Essay’ being the rough sketch (*ébauche*) of which the *Traité des Sensations* is the perfected picture;—such a notion can only be entertained by those who blindly accept traditionary judgments. The brief exposition we shall give of Condillac is a sufficient answer to all such assertions.

their force; the mind is at once occupied more particularly with the sensation which preserves its vivacity, *and that sensation becomes attention*, without its being necessary for us to suppose *anything else in the mind*.

"If a new sensation acquire greater vivacity than the former, it will become in its turn attention. But the greater the force which the former had, the deeper the impression made on us, and the longer is it preserved. Experience proves this.

"Our capacity of sensation is therefore divided into the sensation we have had, and the sensation which we now have; we perceive them both at once, but we perceive them differently: the one seems as past, the other as present. The name of *sensation* designates the impression actually made upon our senses; and it takes that of *memory* when it presents itself to us, as a sensation which has formerly been felt. Memory, therefore, is only the transformed sensation.

"When there is double attention, there is comparison; for to be attentive to two ideas or to compare them, is the same thing. But we cannot compare them without perceiving some difference or some resemblance between them: to perceive such relations is *to judge*. The acts of comparing and judging are therefore only attention; it is thus that sensation becomes successively attention, comparison, judgment."

The other faculties are explained in a similar way, but we need quote no more. That such a system should ever have attained the favour it did, is a striking example of the facility with which men may be led by an artful use of words. Verbal distinctions, it is notorious, are the *pabulum* of

Metaphysicians; but that *such* word-jugglery as this should succeed may well be pronounced a marvel. It is merely *calling* thoughts and faculties sensations, and the thing is done. Take up, for a moment, the "generation" of attention as explained by Condillac. You have seen his analysis. Attention consists in the vivacity of a sensation; nothing more. There is no effort of the Will. It is not the mind that attends; it is the vivacity which deepens the impressions and brings them into notice. Now, we ask you to interrogate your own experience, and say whether Attention be not *voluntary* as well as involuntary. You are in conversation with some loud-voiced importunate bore, who holds your button-hole. Out of politeness you attend to what he says. Suddenly the fragment of a remark, made at another part of the room, strikes on your ear; you wish to listen to it; and although your loud-voiced friend continues talking, yet you, by an effort, catch what is being said elsewhere. This you do by an effort of your will. That is to say, you will to *attend* to what is being said elsewhere; and though inasmuch as you cannot escape the laws of your own constitution, you are forced to *hear* what the bore utters, you *attend* only to what you wish to hear from another. When we tell a man to listen, do we not appeal to his *will* to give due attention? or do we only tell him to let some sound have the predominance in vivacity?

If then, in Attention we discover an act of the Will—a something which is not sensation—we need proceed no further.* Condillac's analysis is false;

* Condillac, indeed, would get out of the dilemma by saying that the will itself was only a sensation of great vivacity; but this assumption is too gross for refutation.

and Comparison, which is "double attention," and Judgment, which is only comparison, may be safely left to the author of the *Traité des Sensations* and his school.

Condillac said that science is only a well constructed language (*une langue bien faite*); so much did he rely upon precision in words. Nor is this inexplicable in a man who fancied he had reduced the analysis of mind to its simplest elements by merely naming them differently. It is, however, as absurd to call ideas sensations, because originally the ideas were sensations, as it would be to call reasoning observation, because reasoning is founded on observation. We will go further and say that it would be not less absurd to declare red and green to be the same, because they are both colours, as to say ideas and sensations are the same, because they are both affections of the mind. The only excuse for the error is in the common, but false, supposition that ideas are faint impressions. They are not impressions at all. An idea is called a remembered sensation. Condillac tells us that this remembrance is only a lesser degree of vivacity in the sensation. We answer that the idea is nothing of the kind; that so far from being the sensation in a lesser degree, it is not the sensation at all; it is altogether different from the sensation. You have the idea of pain; it shall be of a particular pain—that of toothache. Now although every man, who has experienced toothache, can have a very distinct idea of it (in other words, he can think of, and talk of toothache), we defy you to detect in your idea any resemblance whatever to the sensation. Try to recall the sensation; you cannot. Nor is this wonderful; sensation is *feel-*

ing, thought is *thinking*. To suppose feeling and thinking are the same (although both may come under the term feeling by giving it some new general sense) is an absurdity reserved for the sensational school, the last and not the least illustrious of whom, M. Destutt de Tracy, consolidated it into an aphorism : *penser c'est sentir*.

The ambiguities of language have in this case been assisted by the nature of our sensations. Thus all our visual ideas, inasmuch as they assume shape, do *seem* like faint sensations ; the reason is that although it is a very different thing to look at the sun and to think of it, yet in the latter case our idea corresponds in some measure with our sensation : it is the idea of a round, yellow, luminous body : it is not improperly called an *image* of the sun. If it is an image of the sun, we might easily conclude that it was a faint copy of our sensation. In the case of other senses, there is no difficulty in detecting the error. When we say that we can recall the sensation of fragrance or of sweetness, we confound our power of thinking of a thing, with our power of feeling it. There is in truth a wide distinction between Thought and Sensation, which it is fatal to overlook ; nor could it have been overlooked but for the introduction and adoption of that much abused word *idea* instead of *thought*.

The whole "scheme of Materialism," as it is called, is shallow, and its pretended simplicity is gained by a vicious use of language. The attempt to construe matter into mind belongs to the same unscientific spirit as that which attempted to reduce the phenomena of Life to Chemistry. Now if matter must, in science at least, be divided into

organic and inorganic—the phenomena of the former never being wholly reducible to the laws of the latter—in the same way, admitting, with Locke, that God may have superadded to matter the faculty of thinking, we should still be forced by all sound rules of philosophy, to distinguish matter as *physical*, from matter as organic and as inorganic; or, as Locke so well says, “the general idea of substance being the same everywhere, the modification of thinking, or the power of thinking joined to it, *makes it a spirit without considering what other modifications it has, or whether it has the modifications of solidity or not.*”

But, in regarding materialism as unscientific, we must also regard the hypothesis of a “spirit” superadded to the brain as not less so, nay as rather more so. The whole dispute is frivolous, and has only acquired its importance from a supposed connexion with religious doctrines.

Condillac’s theory of the origin of Knowledge has two points deserving a passing notice. The first is the reduction of all knowledge to sensation. The second is the dogma of our faculties not being innate.

The first is the doctrine of Gassendi and Hobbes. It is thus stated by Diderot—one of Condillac’s most celebrated pupils:—“Every idea must necessarily, when brought to its state of ultimate decomposition, resolve itself into *a sensible* representation or picture; and since everything *in* our understanding has been introduced there by the channel of sensation, whatever proceeds *out* of the understanding is either chimerical or must be able, in returning by the same road, to re-establish itself to its sensible archetype. Hence an important rule

in philosophy, That every expression which cannot find an external and a sensible object to which it can thus establish its affinity, is destitute of signification."*

The consequences to be drawn from such a rule are apparent. But will the rule hold good? Hardly. The least experience is sufficient to convince us that we have many ideas which cannot be reduced to any *sensible picture* whatever; or, as these philosophers might quibble about the word idea, we would prefer the phrase "many thoughts." That we can think of Goodness, Virtue, Honour, &c., is undeniable. If you say these are "abstract ideas," and fancy that they can have no signification, we desire you to prove that they have none; to us, it is evident, they are as much ideas (thoughts) as the ideas of sensible objects. But should we grant that "abstract ideas" are beside the question, what do you say to our idea of a soul? That is not "abstract;" that is certainly not reducible to a *sensible picture*. That one example is a sufficient refutation of the sensational theory.

Now for the second point: Condillac, we believe, was the first to catch a glimpse of the important truth that our faculties are not innate—are not even con-nate; but he made a sad bungle in attempting to trace the generation of these faculties. That men are not born with the powers of reasoning, remembering, imagining, and willing, is a proposition which will meet with very little credit at first. A little experience and reflection, however, show us that as the child certainly cannot reason, remember, imagine, or will, these being faculties subsequently

* 'Œuvres VI.,' as quoted by Dugald Stewart, 'Philos. Essays,' p. 166.

and slowly developed; so may we conclude that the mental faculties are only *potentially* in the new-born child. The baby can no more reason than he can run. He *learns* to do both; and, before he can learn, the muscles of his mind no less than the muscles of his legs must grow, be developed, and strengthened by exercise. Man is no more born with reason and will, than an acorn is an oak. Every grown man has Reason and Will, as every oak has branches and foliage. But the infant and the acorn, though they contain that within them which, under fitting circumstances, will be developed into reason in the one and foliage in the other, cannot be said to have as yet either reason or foliage.

What a new aspect this consideration gives to the science of psychology! It is perhaps the most important discovery ever made, and yet one which is apparently the most obvious, and the most obtruded upon our experience by the daily observation of children. Condillac has the merit of having first seen it; but he saw it very imperfectly, and failed altogether to make any good use of it. As an example: He who told us that our faculties were not innate, but were "acquired habits," tells us, when he comes to the generation of those faculties, that they spring into existence at once—they are born full grown—the acorn suddenly leaps into an oak. Thus his famous statue has Memory, Judgment, Desire, &c., as soon as it has Sensations. This is enough to show that if Condillac discovered an important fact, he only stumbled over it and knew not its significance.*

* The only person who, to our knowledge, has made any use of this fact, is Dr. Beneke of Berlin, who has made it

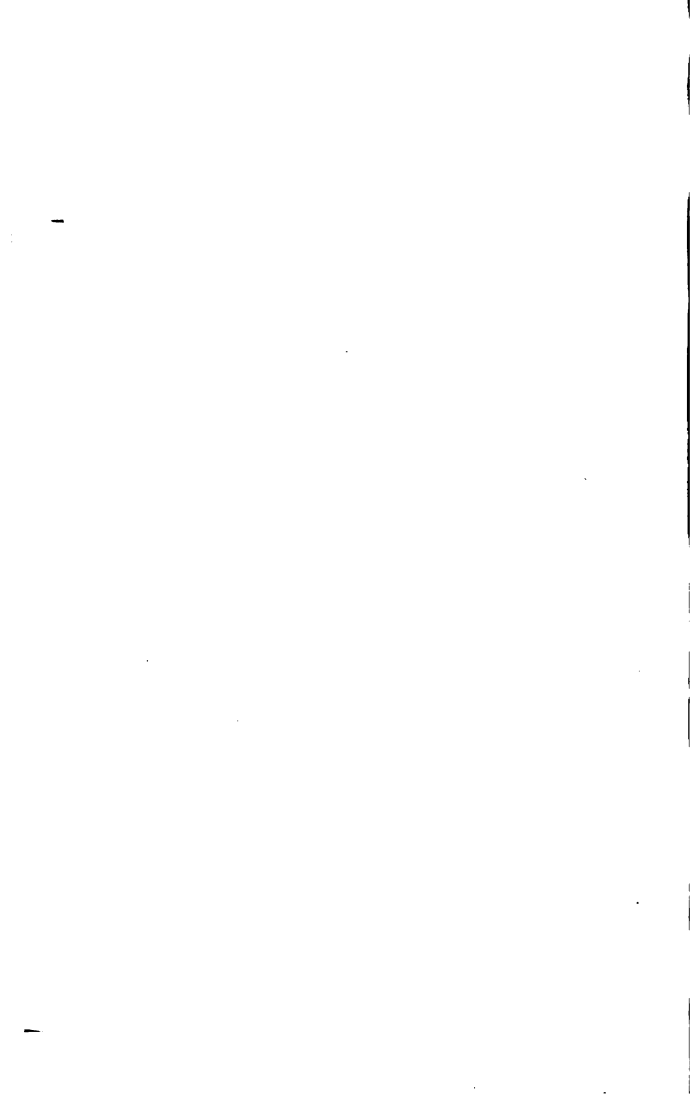
Let us hope that, if England is to produce any new system of psychology, this most important point will not be overlooked: the growth and developement of our faculties is as much a part of psychology, as the growth and developement of our organs is a part of biology.

Condillac has made but a poor figure in our pages; let us hasten to add, that although his fundamental positions are erroneous, his works display considerable merits both in manner and matter. Many valuable remarks and some good analyses may be found in his writings; and the style is so clear that a child might read them. His influence was immense. The whole of the eighteenth century, Philosophy was built upon his system; a Philosophy worthy of its origin: wordy, shallow, and trenchant, pretending to be clear, simple, and rational; a Philosophy which began in confounding Thought with Feeling, and ended in denying God, in favour of a Goddess called Nature!

One word, at closing, on Condillac's historical position. He departed in such a manner from Locke, that it seems strange he should ever have been considered as a disciple. But we have express testimony to the fact that he was Locke's disciple; and if we consider for a moment the great stress which Locke always placed upon the sensuous origin of our knowledge—that being the point he wished to bring prominently forward, because his adversaries had neglected it—we shall easily conceive how Condillac might have been more impressed with that part of the system than with the other, which Locke had rather indicated than the basis of his whole philosophy. See '*Neue Psychologie*,' also the '*Lehrbuch der Psychologie*,' Berlin, 1845.

developed. Moreover, it was Locke's object to prove the mind to be a *tabula rasa*, in order to disprove innate ideas. This once being granted, it was easy to fall into the error of Condillac's "simplification."

Throughout the history of psychology one may see a constant tendency to give undue prominence to one set of facts ; and this will generally be found to arise by way of re-action against the reigning doctrines. Now the materialists are in the ascendant, and nothing but the facts of sensation are treated of; and now the spiritualists are in the ascendant, and nothing but the facts of the mind's activity are dwelt on. Each party is right in the dogmatic portion; each party is wrong in excluding facts which its system cannot explain.



SEVENTH EPOCH.

**SECOND CRISIS — IDEALISM, SCEPTICISM, AND
MATERIALISM PRODUCING THE REACTION OF
COMMON SENSE.**

CHAP. I. REID.

CHAPTER I.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMMON SENSE: REID.

DUGALD STEWART opens his 'Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Reid' with remarking that the life was "uncommonly barren of those incidents which furnish materials for biography;" and as our space is scanty, we will content ourselves with a bare enumeration of such facts as may be useful for reference. Thomas Reid was born in 1710, at Strachan in Kincardineshire. He was educated at Marischall College, Aberdeen. In 1752 he occupied the chair of Moral Philosophy in Aberdeen. In 1764 appeared his 'Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense.' In 1763* "the Inquiry received a still more substantial testimony of approbation from the university of Glasgow," in the offer of the chair of Moral Philosophy, vacant by the resignation of Adam Smith. In 1780 Reid resigned his office, and passed the remaining years of his life in retirement and study. In 1785 appeared his 'Essays on the Intellectual Powers.' He died at Glasgow in 1796, having survived four of his children.

Reid's philosophy made a great stir at first, but

* We follow Stewart; but there must be some error here. If the 'Inquiry' was not published till 1764, Reid could not in 1763 have been offered the chair at Glasgow as a "testimony of approbation."

has for some years past been sinking into merited neglect. The appeal to Common Sense as arbiter in Philosophy, is now pretty well understood to be on a par with Dr. Johnson's kicking a stone by way of refuting Berkeley. Indeed Dugald Stewart himself was fully alive to the inconsequence of such an argument, and endeavoured to shield his master by saying that the phrases "Common Sense" and "Instinct" were unhappily chosen. Unfortunately they were not mere phrases with Reid; they were principles. It is impossible to read the 'Inquiry' and not see that Reid took his stand upon Common Sense;* and Beattie and Oswald, his immediate disciples, are still more open to the charge.

"It is genius," he says, "and not the want of it, that adulterates philosophy, and fills it with error and false theory." This aphorism is the key to all his writings. Few would ever accuse him of that pernicious quality—genius. He was a quiet, sober, patient thinker; but he was neither subtle nor profound. We know of few works from which less is to be gained than from those in which he has vindicated Common Sense—which stood in no need of vindication.

It would carry us to great lengths if we were to examine all the questionable tenets contained in the 'Philosophy of Common Sense.' We cannot, however, pass the supposed triumph over Locke, who said that personal identity consists in Con

* "I despise Philosophy, and renounce its guidance: let my soul dwell with Common Sense." ('Inquiry,' chap. i. § 3.) Let it be observed in passing, that by Reid's disciples the 'Inquiry' is always regarded as his great work; the 'Essays' were written in old age.

sciousness; "that is," continues Reid, "if you are conscious that you did such a thing a twelvemonth ago, this consciousness of what is past can signify nothing else but the remembrance that I did it; so Locke's principle must be, that Identity consists in remembrance; and, consequently, a man must lose his personal identity with regard to every thing he forgets." Here Locke is altogether misstated. Consciousness does not resolve itself into any single act of memory, as Reid would here have us believe, nor can personal identity be limited to any one act. I have the consciousness of a certain mental state, therewith is connected the remembrance of some anterior state, which was also connected with an anterior state, and so on. The chain is made up of many links, and although some of these may be out of sight, not one is broken. I am connected with my boyhood by a regular series of transmitted acts of consciousness. I may have forgotten a thousand things, but I have not forgotten myself: if *one* act performed yesterday is forgotten to-day, *all* are not forgotten; and to remember one, however indistinctly, is sufficient to keep up the continuity of consciousness. Let those who fancy the sentiment of personal identity does not consist in the consciousness of personal identity, show us in what it does consist.

We come now to Reid's great achievement, that upon which he declared his philosophical fame to rest, the refutation of Berkeley and Hume by the refutation of the Ideal theory. This he considered as his contribution to philosophy; this has been made the monument of his glory. It appears to us, after a long acquaintance with his writings, and a careful perusal of what his critics and ad-

mirers have advanced, that his sole merit in this respect is that of having called attention to some abuses of language, and to some examples of metaphors being taken for facts. How much confusion the word "idea" has always created, since Aristotle cursed it, to the present day, need scarcely be alluded to; and any attempt to destroy the acceptance of the word as tantamount to *image*, must be welcomed as salutary. So far let us be grateful to Reid. Locke's use of the word "idea" as signifying "a thought" instead of an "image," has misled thousands. But whatever abuses may have crept in with the use of idea, it seems to us quite clear that Berkeley and Hume are not to be refuted by refuting the hypothesis of ideas, as Reid and his school suppose.

Let us, to avoid useless discussion, take it for granted that philosophers did adopt the theory of ideas which Reid combats; let us also grant that Reid has overturned that theory. What advance is made towards a solution of the problem? Not one step. The dilemma into which Hume threw Philosophy remains the same as ever.

As I cannot transcend the sphere of my Consciousness, I can never know things but as they act upon me—as they affect my Consciousness. In other words, a knowledge of an external world otherwise than as it appears to my Sense, which transforms and distorts it, is impossible.

This proposition may be said to form the ground of Scepticism. Now, we ask, how is that proposition affected by overthrowing the ideal theory? What does it signify whether the "affections of my consciousness" be regarded as "images" or not? They do not remain less purely *subjective*,

whichever way we regard them. They are changes *in me*. Now the main position of Scepticism is precisely this subjectivity of knowledge. Because we cannot transcend consciousness, we can never know things *per se*. Reid acknowledges that we cannot know things *per se*; but he says that we must believe in them, because in what we do know their existence is *suggested*. This is exactly the opinion of Locke; nay more, it is the doctrine of Hume: for he says that we do believe in an external world, though we have no good reason for doing so. Sir J. Mackintosh relates that he once observed to Dr. Thomas Brown that he thought Reid and Hume differed more in words than opinion; Brown answered, "Yes, Reid bawled out we must believe in an outward world; but added in a whisper we can give no reason for our belief. Hume cries out we can give no reason for such a notion; and whispers I own we cannot get rid of it."

A more acute man than Reid would at once have seen that his refutation of the ideal theory left Idealism and Scepticism untouched; for either doctrine it matters little *how* the knowledge be acquired, so that it is entirely subjective.* The argument brought forward by Dugald Stewart—that the belief in the existence of an external world is one of the Fundamental Laws of Human Belief—is far more philosophical; but when he says that Berkeley's Idealism was owing to the unhappy and unphilosophical attempt of Descartes to prove the existence of the world, he forgets that Idealism was

* In fact Malebranche's Idealism, which is very similar to Berkeley's, is founded on a theory of Perception almost identical with Reid's!

known in the ancient schools long before any one thought of proving the existence of matter. Moreover, although Stewart's formula is not open to the same objections as Reid's, yet it leaves the vital question untouched.

No one doubts that we believe in the existence of an external world. Idealism never questions the fact. The only doubt is whether that belief be objectively as well as subjectively true. To say that the belief in objective existence, is a Fundamental Law, is simply saying that *we are so constituted* that we are forced to attribute external reality to our sensations. As well say we are so constituted that fire applied to our bodies will give us pain. *We are so constituted.* What then? Have we advanced one step? Not one. We have still to seek some proof of the laws of our constitution being the measure of the laws of other existences—still to seek how what is true of the subjective must necessarily be true of the objective.

Thus granting to Stewart all he claims, we see that he does not attain to the heart of the question; and, strictly speaking, he does not touch Berkeley at all; he only touches Hume. For what answer can it be to Berkeley, to say that our Belief in matter is a Fundamental Law not to be questioned? Berkeley would reply: "Exactly; I said as much. I said that men believed their senses, and believed that what they saw was *out* of them. This is the law of human nature: God has so ordained it. But that which men do *not* believe, is the existence of an occult substance, a phantom-world lying underneath all appearances. You do not mean to assert that the belief in this substance is a Fundamental Law? If you do, you must be mad."

Stewart's answer is thus shown to be quite *beside* the mark.

Reid constantly declares that no reason can be given for our belief; it must be referred to an original instinctive principle of our constitution implanted in us for that express purpose. If this be so, we ask upon what pretence does Reid claim the merit of having refuted Idealism and Scepticism by refuting the ideal hypothesis? If *instinct* and not *reason* is to settle the question, then has the *ideal hypothesis* nothing to do with it; if the refutation of the ideal hypothesis sufficed, then has instinct nothing to do with it. "To talk of Dr. Reid," says a very able writer, "as if his writings had opposed a barrier to the prevalence of sceptical philosophy, is an evident mistake. Dr. Reid successfully refuted the principles by which Berkeley and Hume endeavoured to establish their conclusions; but the conclusions themselves he himself adopted as the very premisses from which he reasons. The impossibility of proving the existence of a material world from 'reason, or experience, or instruction, or habit, or any other principle hitherto known to philosophers,' is the argument and the *only* argument by which he endeavours to force upon us his theory of *instinctive* principles."*

It appears, then, that inasmuch as Reid declares *instinct* to be the *only* principle upon which we can found our belief in an external world, his argument against Berkeley is trebly vicious. First, because the *belief* was never questioned; secondly, because although we must *act* according to our in-

* 'Quarterly Review,' on Stewart's 'Second Dissertation.' Having the paper bound up separately, we can give no more definite reference.

instincts, that is no sort of proof that our *beliefs are true*; thirdly, because if instinct and not reason is to be the arbiter, the attack on the ideal hypothesis is utterly beside the question.

Thus we see that granting to Reid the glory he claims of having destroyed the ideal hypothesis, he has only destroyed an outpost, and fancies it to be the fortress. A few words on his own theory of perception may not be out of place here.

He justly enough declared the ideal hypothesis to be gratuitous. We have no reason for supposing that the mind perceives images of things instead of the things themselves. But he overlooks, or rather denies, the fact that we perceive things *mediately*; he says we perceive them *immediately*. His explanations are contradictory and confused, but he repeats the assertion so often, that there can be no doubt he meant to say we perceive things *immediately*: the mind stands face to face with the thing, and perceives it immediately, without any medium of ideas, images, eidola, or the like. In this we believe him utterly in the wrong; his battle against "ideas" carried him too far. It is one thing to say that *we are affected by the things*, and not by *images* of things; and another thing to say that *we perceive things immediately*. The former is correct; the latter is in direct contradiction with all we know of perception, and Reid himself constantly contradicts himself on the point.

"When I attend," he says, "as carefully as I can, to what passes in my mind, it appears evident that the *very thing* I saw yesterday, and the fragrance I smelled, are now the *immediate objects* of my mind when I remember it. . . . Upon the strictest attention, memory appears to me to have

the things that are past, *and not present ideas*, for its objects."

This is his position against the ideal hypothesis which assumes that nothing is perceived but what is in the mind which perceives it; that we do not really perceive things which are external, but only certain images and pictures of them imprinted on the mind.

Reid's position is untenable. The *very thing*, the rose, of which he thinks, is not an *immediate object* at all: it is elsewhere. The fragrance cannot even be recalled; that is to say, cannot be *felt* again in *thought*. All we can remember is the fact of having been affected by the rose in a manner we call fragrance; we cannot recall the affection.* Reid could hardly therefore have meant what his words literally express. Perhaps he meant, that when I think of the rose and the fragrance, the object of which I think is the rose, not an idea of the rose. But what a truism! He says, that "in memory the *things* that are past, and not present *ideas*, are the objects of the mind." This is either a needless truism or a falsism. Let us alter the sentence thus—"in memory the *things thought of* are not themselves present to the mind, but the *thoughts* only are present to it." Reid would not dispute this—could not dispute it: yet it is only a more guarded statement of the ideal hypothesis; it substitutes "thoughts" for "ideas." He was misled by the ambiguity of the word "object," which he uses as if meaning simply *what the mind is thinking of*; and of course the mind thinks *of* the thing, and not *of* the idea. But the

* See the remarks on Condillac's confusion of sensation and thought.

ideal hypothesis takes "object" to be that which is *immediately present to*—face to face with the mind—viz., an idea, or thought; and of course the mind thinks *by* its thoughts: it may think *about the thing*, but it is *through the medium of thought*.

The difference is this. The Idealist says, that when things affect us, our sensations are what we perceive, and not the Things producing those sensations. Reid says, we feel our sensations, but therewith also we perceive the things. The Idealist further says, that when we think of things, the immediate object face to face with the mind is not a thing but an idea (thought). Reid says the object is the *very thing*: which is either an absurdity or else does not differ from the ideal hypothesis.

We are quite ready to admit that the pretended separation of thoughts from thinking, and the making thoughts "objects," is vicious; and therefore Reid's language is perhaps less objectionable. But we must confess that we see no other advantage he gains over his adversaries. He does not pretend that our sensations are at all *like* their causes; nay, he fancies that he destroys the ideal hypothesis by insisting on the want of resemblance between matter and our sensations. He says, over and over again, that the external world is in no respect like our sensations of it. "Indeed, no man can conceive any sensation to resemble any known quality of bodies. Nor can any man show, by any good argument, that all our sensations might not have been as they are, though no body, nor quality of body, had ever existed" (*Inquiry*, ch. v. § 2). This granted, the question arises, how do you know anything of the external world? Reid answers, "It is owing to an original instinct im-

planted in us for that purpose." Push the question further, drive him into a corner, and bid him tell you what that instinct enables you to know of matter, and he will answer, "In sensation there is suggested to us a cause of that sensation in the quality of a body capable of producing it." This is Locke's view.

The great point in Reid's theory is, that with our sensations are joined perceptions. "The senses have a double province," he says; "they furnish us with a variety of sensations, some pleasant, others painful, and others indifferent; at the same time they give us a conception, and an invincible belief of the existence of external objects. This conception and belief, which Nature produces by means of the senses, we call *perception*." * This, upon which so much stress is laid that, owing to ignorance of it, philosophers are said to have been always in error, we regard as a remarkable instance of Reid's want of subtlety. Neither Berkeley nor Hume denied the fact of our belief in the externality of the causes of sensations: Berkeley denied that these causes had an occult substratum; Hume denied that any reason could be given for our belief in their externality. What force then has "Perception?" It is nothing more than that "belief," according to Reid; though to call perception a *belief* is, to say the least, a somewhat inaccurate use of language. But grant all he wishes, and you grant that with our sensations there is an accompanying belief in the existence of an external cause of those sensations. Berkeley would answer, "Very true; but that cause is not

* 'Essays on Intell. Powers,' ii. ch. 17

unthinking matter." Hume would answer, "Very true; but we can give no reason for our belief; we can know nothing of the cause." Reid can only retort, "Perception is Belief." A position which has been deemed satisfactory by his school; which really is only an abuse of language; and which, moreover, has the further disadvantage of being available only as an argument against Hume, for against Berkeley it is powerless. If Perception is Belief, and we perceive an external world, Hume may be answered when he says we have no grounds for our belief. But Berkeley is not answered. He says that we *do* believe in an external world; but that world is not a world of unthinking matter—it is a world of divine agency. Reid would not pretend that in sensation or perception we can distinguish the *nature* of the causes which affect us; he constantly tells us that we cannot know *what* those causes are, but only *that* there are causes. As long as the *noumenal* world is removed from our inspection, so long must Berkeley remain unfuted by any theory of perception. The error of his system, as we endeavoured to show, is in the gratuitousness of his assumption with respect to the immediate agency of the Deity.

Reid says, that if we grant Berkeley's premiss—viz., "we can have no conception of any material thing which is not like some sensation in our minds"—then are the conclusions of Idealism and Scepticism unanswerable. This premiss, therefore, he disputes. Now attend to his challenge:—"This I would therefore humbly propose, as an *experimentum crucis*, by which the ideal system must stand or fall; and it brings the matter to a short issue: Extension, figure, and motion may, any one or all of them, be taken for the subject of this ex-

periment. Either they are ideas of sensation, or they are not. If any one of them can be shown to be an idea of sensation, or to have the least resemblance to any sensation, I lay my hand upon my mouth and give up all pretence to reconcile reason to common sense in this matter, and must suffer the ideal scepticism to triumph" (*Inquiry*, ch. v. § 7). It was not till after repeated perusals that we caught the significance of this passage; and are not *quite* positive that we have understood it now. To admit it to have any force at all, we must understand "ideas of sensation" as "*images of sensation.*" Certainly, extension is no copy of any one sensation. But if Reid means to say that the feeling of extension is not the result of complex sensations which a body excites in us—if he means to say that the idea of extension is not an abstract idea by which we express a certain property of bodies, a property known to us only through sensation—then must we cease all dispute, and leave him in possession of his wonderful discovery.

Reid's theory of Perception may be thus stated. External objects occasion certain sensations in us; with these sensations we perceive the existence of certain qualities capable of producing them: these he distinguishes into primary and secondary. The primary, he says, we perceive *immediately*; the second, *mediately*. A curious example of his want of acuteness in supposing that the primary qualities were perceived through a different channel from the secondary!

And this is the theory by which, with the aid of an "original instinct" (some instincts then are acquired?), he is supposed to have refuted Idealism! Any one may see that Berkeley might readily have relinquished his ideal hypothesis, and accepted

Reid's, with perfect security for Idealism. The "unknown causes," which Reid calls "qualities," Berkeley calls "divine laws." The difference is merely nominal.

Thus much with respect to Idealism. With respect to Hume, the theory is almost as harmless. Hume would say, "all that is given in sensation is sensation; your 'perception' (which you call belief) of qualities, amounts to nothing more than a *supposition*—a necessary one, I admit; but I have always said that our belief in external causes of sensation was an *irresistible prejudice*; and my argument is, that we have nothing but the prejudice as a proof—reason, we have none."

Finally, with respect to Locke, it will in the first place be seen that Reid's solution is neither more nor less than that given by Locke; in the second place, the boasted refutation of the ideal hypothesis is always supposed by Reid's school to be a refutation of Locke's view of the origin of Knowledge; and this is a very great mistake. Because Berkeley and Hume pushed Locke's system to conclusions from which he wisely shrank, it has been generally supposed that his account of the origin of our Knowledge was indissolubly bound up with the ideal hypothesis, by it to stand or fall. This probably is the meaning of the vulgar error that Locke's view of Knowledge leads to Atheism. It led to Hume. In disproof of this supposition we answer, firstly, Idealism is not indissolubly bound up with the ideal hypothesis, although Berkeley may have adopted that hypothesis; secondly, Locke's system is altogether independent of the hypothesis, and in his Review of the doctrines of Malebranche he very distinctly and emphatically denies it. The force of this

observation will better be appreciated when it is remembered that, although Locke's language is notoriously unguarded and wavering, all his reasonings are founded on the use of the word "ideas" as synonymous with "notions" or "thoughts."

In conclusion, although we think it has been shown that the Common-Sense Philosophy egregiously failed in answering Berkeley and Hume, it was not without service by directing the attention of mankind more exclusively to psychology. The phrases so complacently used by Dugald Stewart to express the nature of his inquiries, of "inductive metaphysics" and "experimental philosophy of the mind," are perhaps objectionable; but few will deny the value of his 'Elements,' and Brown's 'Lectures,' works so popular as to need no further mention here. The 'Analysis of the Mind,' by the late James Mill, which may be regarded as the developement of Hartley's doctrine, stripped of its physical hypothesis, is less known; but it is a work of far higher value than those just named, and would long ago have been as popular had it been written in a more engaging manner. No one at all interested in these inquiries should omit studying it; and, as one recommendation, although dry, it is brief.

The philosophy of the Scotch School was a protest against Scepticism. It failed; but another protest was made in Germany, and on Philosophical principles. That also failed, but in another way; and the attempt was altogether more worthy of Philosophy. The reader foresees that we allude to Kant.

EIGHTH EPOCH.

RECURRENCE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION
RESPECTING THE ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE—
KANT'S CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

CHAP. I. LIFE OF KANT.

CHAP. II. HIS HISTORICAL POSITION.

CHAP. III. HIS PSYCHOLOGY.

CHAP. IV. CONSEQUENCES OF KANT'S PSYCHO-
LOGY.

CHAP. V. EXAMINATION OF HIS FUNDAMENTAL
PRINCIPLES.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF KANT.

IMMANUEL KANT was born at Königsberg in Prussia, 22nd April, 1724. His family was originally Scotch, a circumstance which, when taken in conjunction with his philosophical connexion with Hume, has some little interest. His father was a saddler, a man of tried integrity. His mother was somewhat severe, but upright, speaking the truth, and exacting it. Kant was early bred in a love of truth, and had before him such examples of moral worth as must materially have contributed to form his own inflexible principles.

Madame de Staël has remarked that there is scarcely another example, except among the Greeks, of a life so rigorously philosophical as that of Kant. He lived to a great age, and never once quitted the snows of murky Königsberg. There he passed a calm and happy existence, meditating, professing, and writing. He had mastered all the sciences; he had studied languages, and cultivated literature. He lived and died a type of the German Professor: he rose, smoked, took his coffee, wrote, lectured, took his daily walk always at precisely the same hour. The cathedral clock, it was said, was not more punctual in its movements than Immanuel Kant.*

* He mentions having once been kept two or three days from his promenade by reading Rousseau's 'Emile,' which had just appeared.

He was early sent to the University. There he began and there he ended his career. Mathematics and physics principally occupied his attention at first; and the success with which he pursued these studies was soon made manifest in various publications. He predicted the existence of the planet Uranus; and Herschel himself, after discovering it, admitted Kant's having first announced it.

But none of these publications attracted much attention till the renown of his 'Critique of Pure Reason' had made everything produced by him a matter of interest. Nor did the 'Critique' itself attract notice at first. The novelty of its views, the repulsiveness of its terminology and style, for some time obscured its real value. This value was at length discovered and made known. All Germany rang with praises of the new philosophy. Almost every "chair" was filled by a Kantist. Endless books and some few pamphlets (a German has seldom the courage to write a pamphlet: it is too small) came rapidly from the press, and either attacked or defended the principles of the Critical Philosophy. Kant had likened himself to Copernicus. The disciples likened him both to Copernicus and Newton. He had not only changed the whole science of Metaphysics, as Copernicus had changed the science of Astronomy, but had also consummated the science he had originated.

The 'Critique' was, he tells us, the product of twelve years' meditation. It was written in less than five months. These two facts sufficiently explain the defects of its composition. In his long meditations he had elaborated his system, divided and subdivided it, and completed its heavy and useless terminology. In the rapidity of composition he had no time for the graces of style, nor for that

all-important clearness of structure which (depending as it does upon the due gradation of the parts, and upon the clearness with which the parts themselves are conceived) may be regarded as the great desideratum of a philosophical style.

But in spite of its defects—defects which would have been pardoned by no public but a German public—the ‘Critique’ became celebrated, and its author had to endure the penalty of celebrity. He was pestered with numerous calls of curious strangers, who would not leave Königsberg without having seen him. To the curious were added the admiring. Enthusiastic scholars undertook long journeys to see their great master. Professor Reuss one day walked into his study, saying brusquely that “he had travelled one hundred and sixty miles to see and speak with Kant.” The visits became so numerous, that in the latter part of his life he contented himself with merely showing himself at the door of his study for a few minutes.

Kant never spoke of his own system, and from his house the subject was entirely banished. He scarcely read any of the attacks on his works: he had enough of Philosophy in his study and lecture-room, and was glad to escape from it to the topics of the day.

He died on the 12th February, 1804, in the eightieth year of his age, retaining his powers almost to the last. He latterly, during his illness, talked much of his approaching end. “I do not fear death,” he said, “for I know how to die. I assure you that if I knew this night was to be my last, I would raise my hands, and say ‘God be praised!’ The case would be far different if I had ever caused the misery of any of his creatures.”

CHAPTER II.

KANT'S HISTORICAL POSITION.

THERE is a notion, somewhat widely spread through England, that Kant was a "dreamer." He is regarded as a sort of Mystic; and the epithet "*transcendental*" expresses the superb contempt which common sense feels for the vagaries of philosophers. The "dreams of the Kantian philosophy," and "transcendental nonsense," are phrases which, once popular, now less so, are still occasionally to be met with in quarters where one little expects to find them.

Now we are bound to say that, whatever the errors of Kantism, "dreaminess" or "mysticism" are the last qualities to be predicated of it. If its terminology render it somewhat obscure and repulsive, directly the language is comprehended all obscurity falls away, and a system of philosophy is revealed which for rigour, clearness, and, above all, intelligibility, surpasses, by many degrees, systems hitherto considered easy enough of comprehension.

Convinced that the system of Kant is plainly intelligible, and finding that neither Kant himself nor the generality of his expositors have succeeded in overcoming the repulsiveness of neologisms and a cumbrous terminology,* our task is plain. It

* Since this was written we have read the work of Victor Cousin, 'Leçons sur Kant,' vol. i. Paris, 1842. It is not only

must obviously be to give an exposition of the system, as far as possible, in ordinary philosophical language; and by exhibiting the historical position which it occupies, connect it with speculations already familiar to the English reader.

From Spinoza to Kant the great question had been this:—*Have we or have we not any Ideas which can be called necessarily, absolutely true?* A question which resolved itself into this:—*Have we or have we not any Ideas independent of Experience?*

The answer given by the majority of thinkers was, that we had no ideas independent of Experience; and Hume had shown that Experience itself was utterly incompetent to assure us of any truth not simply relative.

Experience irresistibly led to Scepticism. The dilemma, therefore, which we signalized in the First Crisis of modern Philosophy again presented itself: Spinozism or Scepticism? The labours of so many thinkers had only brought the question round to its starting-point; but Spinozism was alarming—Scepticism scarcely less so. Before submitting to be gored by either horn of the dilemma, men looked about to see if there were no escape possible. A

one of the best expositions we have seen; it is also the most intelligible. The chapter on Kant in M. Barchou de Penhoen's useful work, '*Histoire de la Philos. Allemande depuis Leibnitz jusqu'à Hegel*,' 2 vols. Paris, 1836, may also be read with advantage; though incomplete it is intelligible. Readers of German will do well to look at Chalybäus' '*Historische Entwicklung der Speculativen Philos. von Kant bis Hegel*,' Dresden, 1843. Michelet's '*Geschichte der letzten Systeme der Philos. in Deutschland von Kant bis Hegel*,' Berlin, 1837, is a learned and valuable work, but can be read only by the initiated.

temporary refuge was found by the Scotch School in Common Sense, and by Kant in *Criticism*.

Kant called his system the *Critical* Philosophy. His object was to examine into the nature of this *Experience* which led to Scepticism. While men were agreed that Experience was the source of all Knowledge, Kant asked himself, What is this Experience?—What are its Elements?

The problem he set himself to solve was but a new aspect of the problem of Locke's *Essay*. On this deep and intricate question of human Knowledge two opposite parties had been formed—the one declaring that all our Knowledge was given in Experience, and all the materials were derived from Sensation, and Reflection upon those materials; the other declaring that Sensation only furnished a portion of our Experience. This second party maintained that there were Elements of Knowledge which not only were never derived from Sensation, but which absolutely, *transcended* all sensation. Such, for instance, is the idea of Substance. Experience only informs us of *qualities*: to these qualities we add a substratum which we call Substance; and this idea of a substratum which we are *compelled* to add, Locke himself confesses we never gained through any sensation of matter.* Other ideas, such as Causality, Infinity, Eternity, &c., are also independent of Experience: *ergo*, says this school, antecedent to it; *ergo*, INNATE.

In the course of inquiry the untenableness of the theory of innate ideas had become apparent. Descartes himself, when closely pressed by his adversaries, gave it up. Still the fact of our pos-

* *Vide* Epoch Third, chap. vii., for Locke's Explanation of this.

sessing ideas apparently *not* derivable from experience remained, and this fact was to be explained: hence the doctrine of Leibnitz, that although all Knowledge *begins with* Sensation, it is not all *derived from* Sensation; the mind furnishes its quota, and what it furnishes has the character of universality, necessity, consequently of truth, stamped on it. This doctrine, slightly modified, becomes, in the hands of the Scotch, the doctrine of "original instincts"—of "Fundamental Laws of Belief."

Kant also recognised the fact insisted on by the adversaries of the Sensational School; and this fact he set himself carefully to examine. His first object was therefore a Criticism of the operations of the mind.

On interrogating his Consciousness, Kant found that neither of the two ordinary explanations would account for the phenomena: the abstract Ideas we have, such as Time, Space, Causality, &c., could not be resolved into Experience alone; nor, on the other hand, although *à priori*, could they be supposed absolutely *independent* of Experience, since they are, as it were, only the *forms* (necessary conditions) of our Experience.

There are not *two* sources of Knowledge, said he; on the one side external Objects, and on the other Human understanding. Knowledge has but *one* source, and that is the *union* of object and subject. Thus water is the *union* of oxygen and hydrogen; but you cannot say that water has two causes, oxygen and hydrogen; it has only one cause, viz., the union of the two.

The whole world is to us a series of Phenomena. Are these Appearances the *production of the Mind* to which they appear; or are they the pure *presenta-*

tion of the things themselves? Idealism or Realism? Neither; yet both. The Mind and the object *co-operating* produce the appearance or Perception. In their union Perception is effectuated.

The Mind has certain materials furnished it, and on these materials it imposes certain forms or conditions of its own. These forms alone make perception possible, since they constitute the modes of the mind's operation. If we had only sensations—that is, supposing objects acted upon us, and *we did not also act upon them*—the result would be no more than that of the wind playing on the *Æolian harp*; Experience would be impossible. To make Experience possible the mind must grasp objects in a synthesis of the objects and the forms or conditions of the perceptive power.

His criticism was directed against Locke on the one hand, in establishing that we *have* ideas independent of Experience; and against Hume on the other, in establishing that these ideas have a character of universality, necessity, and irresistibility. But—and the point is important—his criticism proved that these ideas, although universal, and certain, could not be called *absolutely* true: they were only *subjectively* true. This was falling back into Hume's position; since although Hume called belief in causality the effect of habit, and Kant called it a law of the mind, yet both agreed in denying to it any *objective* truth; both agreed that a knowledge of things *per se* was impossible.

We regard the result of Kant's investigation of the elements of Thought as nothing less than a scientific basis for Scepticism. He likens his philosophical reform to the reform introduced into Astronomy by Copernicus. Finding the labours of

men unsatisfactory, Copernicus bethought him that perhaps success might crown his efforts if he shifted his ground, if, instead of assuming that the sun turned round the earth, he were to assume that the earth turned round the sun. So Kant says, that the ordinary assumption of our knowledge following the order of external objects, seemed to him better if reversed, and if we were to assume that the objects obeyed the laws of our mental constitution. And he calls his system critical, because it is founded on an examination of our cognitive faculties. Both the name and the comparison appear to us erroneous. An examination of the cognitive faculties was, as we have often said, the great matter of philosophical speculation since Spinoza; and although the examination of Kant differed from every other in result, it in nowise differed in method. Copernicus positively changed the point of view. Kant did nothing of the kind: his attempt to deduce the laws of the phenomenal world from the laws of mind, was little more than the attempt of Descartes to deduce the world from Consciousness; and is the same as the attempts of Leibnitz and Berkeley in method; and the *result* is the result obtained by Hume, viz., that we can know nothing but our own ideas, we can never know things *per se*. Kant, after analysing the operations of the mind, discovered indeed certain principles of certitude; but he admitted that those principles could not be applied to things *beyond* the Mind; and that all within the sphere of our cognition was no more than phenomenal. He reviews his investigation, and then declaring that he has gone the round of the domain of human Understanding and measured it

exactly, he is still forced to admit that that domain is only an island. Nature has assigned to it invariable limits. It is the empire of Truth ; but it is surrounded by a stormy and illimitable sea, upon which we discover nothing but illusions. There, on that sea, the navigator, deceived by masses of ice which appear and disappear successively before him, believing that at every moment he is about to discover land, wanders without repose guided only by one hope ; he is the plaything of the stormy waves, always forming new plans, always preparing himself for new experiences, which he cannot renounce, and yet which he can never obtain.

To the Sceptic Kant says, "No : experience is not a deceit ; human Understanding has its fixed laws, and those laws are true."

To the Dogmatist he says, "But this Understanding can never know Things *per se*. It is occupied solely with its own Ideas. It perceives only the Appearances of Things. How would it be possible to know Noumena ? By stripping them of the *forms* which our Sensibility and Understanding have impressed upon them (*i. e.*, by making them cease to be Appearances). But to strip them of these forms we must annihilate Consciousness—we must substitute for our present Sensibility and Understanding a faculty or faculties capable of perceiving Things *per se*. This, it is obvious, we cannot do. Our only means of communication with Objects are precisely this Sensibility and this Understanding, which give to Objects the forms under which we know them."

To the Dogmatist, therefore, Kant's reply is virtually the same as Hume's. He proves that the Understanding, from the very nature of its consti-

tution, cannot know Things *per se*. The question then arises, Have we any other Faculty capable of knowing Things *per se*? The answer is decisive, We have *no* such Faculty.

The difference between Hume and Kant, when deeply considered, is this. Hume said that the Understanding was treacherous, and, as such, it rendered Philosophy impossible. Kant said that the Understanding was not treacherous but limited; it was to be trusted as far as it went, but it *could* not go far enough; it was so circumscribed that Philosophy was impossible.

This difference, slight as it may appear, led to important differences in the application of Kant's principles. The mendacity of Consciousness maintained by Hume led him to utter Scepticism in Philosophy and in Religion, as subjects on which reason could not pronounce. The veracity of Consciousness (as far as it went) maintained by Kant, was a firm and certain basis, though a limited one, on which to build Religion and Morals, as we shall see hereafter. Kant's critics do not appear to be aware of the consequences resulting from his exposition of the veracity of the Understanding. Yet as the battle was confessedly between him and Hume, it might have been suspected that he would not have left the field entirely to his antagonist.

The reader is, we trust, now prepared to follow with interest the leading points of Kant's analysis of the mind. In giving an indication of the *result* of that analysis, before giving the analysis itself, we hope to have so far interested the reader that he will read the analysis with sharpened attention, seeing whither dry details are leading, he will not deem them dry.

And first of the famous question : *How are synthetic judgments, à priori, possible?* This is the nut Kant has to crack with Hume. But first let us understand Kant's language. He divides all our judgments into two classes, analytic and synthetic. The analytic judgment is, as it were, but *a writing out* of our experience. When we say that a triangle is a figure with three sides, or that a body is extended, we are judging analytically ; *i. e.* we are adding nothing to our conception of body or triangle, we are only analysing it. The synthetic judgment, on the contrary, is when we predicate some attribute of a thing, the conception of which does not involve that attribute : such as that a straight line is the shortest road between two points.

There are two classes of synthetic judgments : those *à posteriori* and those *à priori*. The former result from experience : *e. g.*, Gold is ductible. We must absolutely know that Gold *is* ductible before we can predicate ductility of gold. But the *à priori* judgments are independent of experience : *e. g.*, a straight line is the shortest road between two points ; which experience may *confirm*, but which is recognised as true independent of experience ; above all, it has a character of universality which experience could not bestow ; for though experience may show us how a straight line is in many instances the shortest road between two points, it cannot prove that there is absolutely no shorter road in any case.

Kant had to combat Hume on the question of Causality. Hume declared that our experience of Cause and Effect was simply and truly an experience of Antecedence and Sequence ; and that our

attributing a cause to any effect was a mere matter of habit.

True, replied Kant, in the facts of antecedence and sequence, causation is not given; but inasmuch as causation is irresistibly believed in, the idea must have some source. If it is not given in the things observed, then *must* we seek it in the observer. So said Hume also; but he found in the observer no other source than mere *habit*. This is obviously not a sufficient explanation, since upon it we ought to attribute causation to all antecedence and sequence, that of Day and Night, for example.

In this fact of causation what have we? We have first antecedence and sequence; we have next an attribute of causation predicated of them. The first is given in our experience; the second is not given in our experience, but is independent of it. This second is therefore an *à priori* synthetic judgment. By means of such judgments we are not only able to say that one thing is the cause of another, but also we are enabled to make this wide generalization: *Every Effect must have a Cause*. Here, as in the proposition of a straight line being the shortest road between two points, we have an Idea not given in experience, and an idea, the universality of which, experience could never verify.

We are thus led to assert that the Mind does add something to sense-experience; and that what it adds is not only independent of experience, but has the further character of certitude and universality which experience can never claim. The certainty of experience is always limited; it never can have the character of universality, however rich it may be, for after a thousand years it may be proved erroneous. Thus it was universally

believed that all crows were black: a wide experience had established it—yet white crows were found; and experience was forced to acknowledge it had been in error. So with the motion of the sun, once universally believed, because founded upon experience. That which is to be held as irresistibly true, which shall be universally and necessarily maintained by all men, cannot have its origin in Experience, but in the constitution of the Mind. Hence the truth of Mathematics; not, as is so often said, because it is an abstraction of Forms and Relations, but because it is founded on the necessary laws of our mental constitution.

In these synthetic judgments, *à priori*, there is a ground of certitude. The veracity of human reason reposes on that certitude. Although therefore, says Kant, we can never know whether our conceptions of things, *per se*, are *adequate*, we can know what conceptions all men must form of them; although we cannot know if our knowledge has any objective truth, we can be certain of its subjective truth.

A principle of Certitude having been found, nothing further was necessary for its confirmation than to ascertain in how far this principle could be the basis of a science. Kant showed that it formed the basis of all science.

People do not dispute, said he, respecting Mathematics or Logic, or the higher branches of Physics; and if they do dispute, they end by agreeing. But in metaphysics disputes are endless. Why is this?

Simply because Logic, Mathematics, and the higher branches of Physics are Sciences of Generalities; they do not occupy themselves with the variable and contingent, but with the invariable

and universal properties. Logic is composed of rules which are reducible to certain self-evident propositions. These propositions, reduced to their principles, are nothing more than the laws of the human mind. These laws are invariable because human nature is invariable. Mathematics is, in the same way, the study of certain invariable properties, which do not exist in nature, but which are conceptions of the mind acting, according to the laws of the mind, upon data furnished by nature, abstraction being made of all that is variable and uncertain in those data. *E. g.*, the essential properties of an equilateral triangle, abstraction being made of any *body* which is triangular, and only the properties themselves being considered. Here again, science reposes on the laws of the mind.

In physics, since the time of Gallileo, men have seen that they are judges, not the passive disciples, of nature. They propose an *à priori* problem; and, to solve this problem, they investigate nature, they make experiments, and these experiments are directed by reason. It is reason that they follow, even when operating on nature; it is the principles of that reason which they seek in nature, and it is only in becoming rational that physics become a science. Again we find science reposing on the laws of the mind!

Thus, the laws which form the basis of logic, mathematics, and physics, are nothing less than the laws of the human mind. It is, therefore, in the nature of the human mind, that the certitude of all the sciences is to be found; and the principles of this certitude are universality and necessity.

Psychology thus becomes the groundwork of all philosophy; to Kant's psychology we now address ourselves.

CHAPTER III.

KANT'S PSYCHOLOGY.

IT has been shown that experience does not furnish the whole of our knowledge ;

That what it does furnish has the character of contingency and variability ;

That the mind also furnishes an element, and this element is an inseparable condition of all knowledge, without it knowledge could not be ;

That this element has the character of universality and necessity ;

And that the principle of all certitude is precisely this universality and necessity.

It now remains for us to examine the nature of the mind, and to trace the distinctive characters of each element of knowledge, the objective and the subjective.

Instead of saying, with the Sensational School, All our Knowledge is derived from the Senses, Kant said, *Half* of all our Knowledge is derived from the senses : and the half which has another origin is *indissolubly bound up with the former half*. Thus, instead of saying with the Cartesians, that, besides the ideas acquired through the sense, we have also certain ideas which are innate, and irrespective of sense ; Kant said *all* our ideas have a double origin : and this twofold co-operation of object and subject is *indispensable* to all knowledge.

Let us clearly understand Kant's object. He calls his great work the 'Critique of the Pure Reason.' What does that mean? It means an examination of the mind with a view to detect its *à priori* principles. He calls these *pure* because they are *à priori*, because they are above and beyond experience. Having demonstrated that the mind has *some* pure principles—has some ideas which were never given in experience, and must therefore be *à priori*—he was led to inquire how many the mind possessed. In his 'Critique,' therefore, we are only to look for the exposition of *à priori* principles. He does not trouble himself with investigating the nature of perception; he contents himself with the fact that we have sensations, and with the fact that we have ideas whose origin is not sensuous.

The *non-ego* and the *ego*, the objective world and the subjective mind, being placed face to face, the two co-operate to produce knowledge. We are, however, here only concerned with the subject. What do we discover in it? First, a sensibility—a power of being affected by objects; this is what Kant calls the *Receptivity* of the mind: it is entirely passive. By it the representations of objects (*i. e.*, sensations) are received. Secondly, an understanding (*Verstand*)—a faculty of knowing objects by means of the representations furnished by our sensibility; this is an *active* faculty; in antithesis to sensibility, it is a *Spontaneity*.

But our sensibility, although passive, has its laws or conditions; and, to discover these conditions, we must separate in our sensations that which is diverse and multiple from that which remains invariably the same. The objects are numerous and various; the subject remains inviolable. Kant calls the multiple and diverse ele-

ment by the name of *material*; the invariable element by the name of *form*. If, therefore, we would discover the primary conditions of our sensibility, we must discover the invariable elements in all sensations.

There are two invariable elements: *Space* and *Time*. They are the forms of our sensibility. Space is the form of our sensibility, as external; time the form both as internal and external.

Analyse sensations of external things as you will, you can never divest them of the form of space. You cannot conceive bodies without space; but you can conceive space without bodies. If all matter were annihilated, you must still conceive space to exist. Space, therefore, is the indispensable condition of sensation: the form of our external sensibility. It is not given in the materials of sensation; since you may conceive the objects annihilated, but cannot conceive the annihilation of space. Not being given in the material, it must therefore constitute the form.

Similar reasoning proves that time is also the form of our sensibility, considered both as internal and as external. We cannot conceive things as existing, except as existing in time; but we can conceive time as existing, though all things were annihilated. Things subjected to our sensibility are subjected to it in *succession*; that is the form of our sensibility.

Such, then, are the two indispensable conditions of all sensation—the two forms with which *we* invest all the varied materials presented to us. It is evident that these two ideas of space and time cannot have been given in the materials, consequently are not deducible from experience; *ergo*,

they are *à priori*, or, as Kant calls them, *pure intuitions*.

Having settled this point, he enters into his celebrated examination of the question, *Have space and time any objective reality?*

We need not reproduce his arguments, which, however, may be studied as fine dialectical exercises, but content ourselves with giving the result. That result is easily foreseen: If space and time are the forms of our sensibility, and are not given in experience, not given in the materials presented, we may at once assume that they have no existence out of our sensibility.

Having thus discovered the forms of sensibility, we must interrogate the understanding to discover its forms.

The function of the understanding is to judge. It is eminently an active faculty; and by it the perceptions furnished through our sensibility are elevated into conceptions (*Begriffe*). If we had only sensibility we should have sensations, but no knowledge. It is to the understanding that we are indebted for knowledge. And how are we indebted to it? Thus:—the variety of our sensations is reduced to unity—they are linked together and made to interpret each other by the understanding. A sensation in itself can be nothing but a sensation; many sensations can be nothing but many sensations, they can never alone constitute conceptions. But one sensation linked to another by some connecting faculty—the diversity of many sensations reduced to unity—the resemblances, existing amidst the diversity, detected and united together—is the process of forming a conception, and this is the process of the understanding, by

means of imagination, memory, and consciousness.

Our senses, in contact with the external world, are affected by objects in a certain determinate manner. The result Kant calls a representation (*Vorstellung*) in reference to the object represented; an intuition (*Anschauung*) in reference to the affection itself. These intuitions are moulded by the understanding into conceptions; the sensation is converted into a thought.

The understanding is placed in a similar relation to sensibility as sensibility stands to external things. It imposes certain forms on the materials furnished it by sensibility, in the same way as sensibility imposed the forms of space and time upon objects presented to it. These forms of the understanding are the laws of its operation.

To discover these forms we must ask ourselves, What is the function of the understanding?—Judgment. How many classes of judgments are there? In other words, What are the invariable conditions of every possible judgment?—They are four: quantity, quality, relation, modality. Under one of these heads every judgment may be classed.

A subdivision of each of these classes follows:—

I. In judging of anything under the form of *quantity*, we judge of it as unity or as plurality; or, uniting these two, we judge of it as totality. II. So of *quality*: it may be reality, negation, or limitation. III. *Relation* may be that of substance and accident, cause and effect, or action and reaction. IV. *Modality* may be that of possibility, existence, or necessity.

Such are Kant's famous *Categories*. Upon them we need make no comment. They are little better

than those of Aristotle, which we before declared to be useless.* It would be tedious were we to venture further into the arcana of Kantian logic on this subject: let us therefore content ourselves with results.

In those Categories we find the *pure forms* of the understanding. They render thought possible; they are the invariable conditions of all conception; they are the investitures bestowed by the understanding on the materials furnished by sense.

By the Categories, Kant declares he has answered the second half of the question, How are synthetic judgments, *à priori*, possible? The synthetic judgments of the Categories are all *à priori*. But we have not yet exhausted the faculties of the mind. Sensibility has given us intuitions (perceptions), understanding has given us conceptions, but there is still another faculty—the crowning faculty of reason (*Vernunft*), the pure forms of which we have to seek.

Understanding is defined the faculty of judging (*Vermögen der Urtheile*); reason is the faculty of ratiocination—of drawing conclusions from given premises (*Vermögen der Schlüsse*). Reason reduces the variety of conceptions to their utmost unity. It proceeds from generality to generality till it reaches the *unconditional*. Every conception must be reduced to some general idea, that idea again reduced to some still more general idea, and so on till we arrive at an ultimate and unconditional principle, such as God.

Reason not only reduces particulars to a general,

* Compare vol. ii. p. 118. If a metaphysical refutation be needed, see that by Sir W. Hamilton, in his paper on Cousin.—'Ed. Rev.,' Oct. 1829.

it also deduces the particular from the general: thus, when I say "Peter is mortal," I deduce this particular proposition from the general proposition, "All men are mortal;" and this deduction is evidently independent of experience, since Peter being now alive, I can have no experience to the contrary.

These two processes of reducing a particular to some general, and of deducing some particular from a general, constitute ratiocination.

Reason has three pure forms; or, as Kant calls them, borrowing the term from Plato, *ideas*. These are wholly independent of experience; they are above sensibility—above the understanding; their domain is reason, their function that of giving unity and coherence to our conceptions.

The understanding can form certain general conceptions, such as man, animal, tree; but these general conceptions themselves are subordinate to a still more general idea, embracing all these general conceptions in the same way as the conception of man embraces several particulars of bone, blood, muscle, &c. This idea is that of the universe.

In the same way all the modifications of the thinking being—all the sensations, thoughts, and passions—require to be embraced in some general idea, as the ultimate ground and possibility for these modifications, as the noumenon of these phenomena. This idea is that of an *ego*—of a personality—of a soul, in short.

Having thus reduced all the varieties of the *ego* to an unconditional unity, viz. soul, and having also reduced all the varieties of the *non-ego* to an unconditional unity, viz. the world, our task would

seem completed; yet, on looking deeper, we find that these two ideas presuppose a third—a unity still higher, the source of both the world and of the *ego*—viz. God.

God, the soul, and the world are therefore the three ideas of reason, the laws of its operation, the *pure forms* of its existence. They are to it what space and time are to sensibility, and what the categories are to understanding.

But these ideas are simply *regulative*: they operate on conceptions as the understanding operates upon sensations; they are discursive, not intuitive; they are never face to face with their objects: hence reason is powerless when employed on matters beyond the sphere of understanding; it can draw nothing but false deceptive conclusions. If it attempts to operate beyond its sphere—if it attempts to solve the question raised respecting God and the world—it falls into endless contradictions.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSEQUENCES OF KANT'S PSYCHOLOGY.

WE have given briefly the leading points in Kant's analysis of the mind. We have now to trace the consequences of that analysis.

The great question at issue was, *Have we or have we not any ideas which are absolutely, objectively true?* Before this could be answered it was necessary to answer this other question:—*Have we or have we not any ideas independent of experience?* Because if we had not such ideas, we could never pretend to solve the first question: our experience could only be of that which was relative, contingent, *subjective*; and to solve the question we must be in possession of absolute, necessary, *objective* truth.

Kant answered the second question affirmatively. His 'Critique' was a laborious demonstration of the existence of ideas not derived from experience, and in no way resolvable into experience. But he answered the first question negatively. He declared that our ideas were essentially subjective, and could not therefore have objective truth. He did not deny the existence of an external world, on the contrary he affirmed it, but he denied that we can know it: he affirmed that it was essentially unknowable.

The world existed—that is to say, the noumena

of the various phenomena which we perceive, exist. The world is not known to us as it is *per se*, but only as it is *to us*—as it is in our knowledge of it. It *appears* to us; only the appearance therefore can be known; it must ever remain unknown, because, before being known, it must appear to us, *i. e.*, come under the conditions of our sensibility, and be invested with the forms of space and time, and come under the conditions of our understanding, and be invested with the categorical forms.

Suppose object and subject face to face. Before the subject can be effected by the object—that is to say, before a sensation is possible—the object must be modified in the sensation by the forms of our sensibility: here is one alteration. Then before sensation can become thought, it must be subjected to the categories of the understanding: here is another alteration.

Now to know the object *per se*—*i. e.* divested of the modifications it undergoes in the subject—is obviously impossible; for it is the subject which knows, and the subject knows only under the conditions which produce these modifications.

Knowledge, in its very constitution, implies a purely subjective, *ergo* relative character. To attempt to transcend the sphere of the subject is vain and hopeless; nor is it wise to deplore that we are “cabin’d, cribb’d, confined” within that sphere from which we never can escape. As well might the bird, when feeling the resistance of the air, wish that it were in *vacuo*, thinking that there it might fly with perfect ease.

Let us therefore content ourselves with our own kingdom, instead of crossing perilous seas in search of kingdoms inaccessible to man. Let us learn our weakness.

FIRST RESULT.—A knowledge of things *per se* (*Dinge an Sich*) is impossible, so long as knowledge remains composed as at present; consequently ontology, as a science, is impossible.

But, it may be asked, if we never knew noumena (*Dinge an Sich*), how do we know that they exist? Their existence is a necessary postulate. Although we can only know the appearances of things, we are forced to conclude that the things exist. Thus, in the case of a rainbow, we discover that it is only the appearance of certain drops of water: these drops of water again, although owing to us their shape, colour, &c., nevertheless exist. They do not exist as drops of water, because drops of water are but phenomena; but there is an unknown something which, when affecting our sensibility, appears as drops of water. Of this unknown something we can affirm nothing, except that it necessarily exists because it affects us. We are conscious of being affected. We are conscious also that that which affects us must be something different from ourselves. This the law of causation reveals to us.

A phenomenon, inasmuch as it is an appearance, presupposes a noumenon—a thing *which appears*; but this noumenon, which is a necessary postulate, is only negation to us. It can never be positively known; it can only be known under the conditions of sense and understanding, *ergo* as a phenomenon.

SECOND RESULT.—The existence of an external world is a necessary postulate, but its existence is only logically affirmed.

From the foregoing it appears that we are unable to know anything respecting things *per se*; consequently, we can never predicate of our knowledge that it has objective truth.

But our knowledge being purely subjective and relative, can we have no certainty?—are we to embrace scepticism? No.

THIRD RESULT.—Our knowledge, though relative, is *certain*. We have ideas independent of experience; and these ideas have the character of universality and necessity. Although we are not entitled to conclude that our subjective knowledge is completely true, as an expression of the objective fact, yet we are forced to conclude that within its own sphere it is true.

FOURTH RESULT.—The veracity of consciousness is established.

FIFTH RESULT.—With the veracity of consciousness is established the certainty of morals.

It is here we see the amazing importance of Kant's analysis of the mind. Those who reproach him with having ended, like Hume, in scepticism, can only have attended to his 'Critique of the Pure Reason,' which certainly does, as we said before, furnish a scientific basis for scepticism. It proves that our knowledge is relative; and that we cannot assume that things external to us *are* as we conceive them: in a word, that ontology is impossible.

So far Kant goes with Hume. This is the goal they both attain. This is the limit they agree to set to the powers of the mind. But the different views they took of the nature of mind led to the difference we before noted respecting the certainty of knowledge. Kant having shown that consciousness, as far as it extended, was veracious; and having shown that in consciousness certain elements were given which were not derived from experience, but which were necessarily *true*: it

followed that whatever was found in consciousness independent of experience was to be trusted without dispute.

See the consequences. If in consciousness I find the ideas of God, the world, and virtue, I cannot escape believing in God, the world, and virtue. This belief of mine is, I admit, practical, not theoretical; it is founded on a *certainty*, not on a *demonstration*; it is an ultimate fact, from which I cannot escape—it is not a conclusion deduced by reason.

The attempt to demonstrate the existence of God is an impossible attempt. Reason is utterly incompetent to the task. To attempt to penetrate the essence of things—to know things *per se*—to know noumena—is also an impossible attempt. And yet that God exists, that the world exists, are irresistible convictions.

There is another certitude, therefore, besides that derived from demonstration—and this is moral certitude, which is grounded upon belief. I cannot say, “It is morally certain that God exists,” but I must say, “I am morally certain that God exists.”

Here then is the basis for a ‘Critique of the Practical Reason;’ an investigation into the reason, no longer as purely theoretical, but as practical. Man is a being who acts as well as knows. This activity must have some principle, and that principle is *freedom of will*.

As in the theoretical part of Kant's system we saw the supersensual and unconditioned presupposed (under the name of things *per se*), but not susceptible of being known or specified; so in this practical part of the system we find the principle

of freedom altogether abstract and indeterminate. It realises itself in acts.

In the very constitution of his conscience man discovers the existence of certain rules which he is imperatively forced to impose upon his actions; in the same way as he is forced by the constitution of his reason to impose certain laws upon the materials furnished him from without. These moral laws have likewise the character of universality and necessity. The idea of virtue never could be acquired in experience, since all we know of virtuous actions falls short of this ideal which we are compelled to uphold as a type. The inalterable idea of justice is likewise found, *à priori*, in the conscience of men. This indeed has been denied by some philosophers; but all *à priori* truths have been denied by them. They cite the cruel customs of some savage races as proofs that the idea of justice is not universal.* Thus, some tribes are known to kill their old men when grown too feeble; and they test their strength by making these old men hold on to the branch of a tree, which is violently shaken, and those that fall are pronounced too weak to live. But even here, in spite of the atrocity, we see the fundamental ideas of justice. Why should they not abandon these aged men to all the horrors of famine and disease? and why put them to a test? Look where you will, the varied customs of the various nations peopling the earth will show you different notions of what is just and what is unjust; but the *à priori* idea of justice—the moral law from which no conscience can be free—that you will find omnipresent.

* Locke.

We regret that our space will not permit us to enter further into Kant's system of morality, and his splendid vindication of the great idea of duty. But enough has been said to show the dependance of his Critique of the Practical Reason upon the principles of his Critique of the Pure Reason.

CHAPTER V.

EXAMINATION OF KANT'S FUNDAMENTAL
PRINCIPLES.

KANT'S system presents three important points for our consideration :—

I. It assigns a limit to the powers of reason, and clearly marks out the domain of scientific inquiry. In this it is sceptical, and furnishes scepticism with terrible weapons.

II. It proclaims that knowledge has another origin besides experience; and that the ideas thus acquired are necessarily true. In this the veracity of consciousness is established, and scepticism is defeated.

III. It founds upon this veracity of consciousness a system of morals; the belief in a future state, and in the existence of God.

In the course of our exposition we abstained from criticism; certain that it would lead us far beyond our limits; certain also that all minor details might be set aside, and the fundamental principles alone be considered. The three points above mentioned will, if closely examined, be found to present only one calling for discussion here, and that one is the second.

For the admission contained in the first—viz., that we are unable to know things in themselves—gives up philosophy as a matter beyond the reach

of human intelligence. Scepticism is made the only result of legitimate speculation. But against such a conclusion we are practically guarded by the demonstration of our having ideas independent of experience. This is the second point. Were this second point to fall to the ground, nothing but scepticism could remain. With the second point must stand or fall the third.

The second point, therefore, becomes the central and vital point of Kant's system, that must engage our whole attention. All such subsidiary criticism, as is current in Germany and France, respecting the impossibility of separating the objective from the subjective elements of a knowledge which is confessedly both subject and object in one, may be safely set aside. Let the possibility be granted; the vital question is not connected with it. The same may be said of the illogicality of Kant's assuming for the practical reason that which he denies to the pure reason. The vital point in his system is, we repeat, the question as to whether we have ideas independent of experience. This is all-important.

And what gives it its importance? The conviction that if we are sent into this world with certain connate principles of truth, those principles cannot be false; that if, for example, the principle of causality is one which is antecedent to all experience, and is inseparable from the mind, we are forced to pronounce it an ultimate truth.

Now to the question. As Kant confessedly was led to his own system by the speculations of Hume on causation, and as that is the most important of all the *à priori* ideas with which the mind is supposed to be furnished, we will content ourselves

with examining it. If that be found dependent on experience, all the *à priori* ideas must be likewise given up. This is the nut we have to crack; its kernel is the kernel of the whole question. And first of necessary truths, as Dr. Whewell calls *à priori* ideas.

That two straight lines can never meet is a Necessary Truth. That is to say, it necessarily follows from the definition of a straight line. To call it, however, an *à priori* truth, a truth independent of experience, seems to us an example of very imperfect analysis of the mind's operations. An attempt is made to prove that it could never have been gained through experience, because it commands universal assent, and because Experience itself could never give it necessity. Dr. Whewell's argument is, that let us follow two straight lines out as far as we can, we are still unable to follow them to infinity: and, for all our experience can tell us, these lines may possibly begin to approach immediately beyond the farthest point to which we have followed them, and so finally meet. Now what ground have we for believing that this possibility is not the fact? In other words, how do we know the axiom to be absolutely true? Clearly *not* from experience.

We answer, Yes; clearly *from* experience. For our experience of *two parallel* lines is precisely this: they *cannot* enclose space. Dr. Whewell says that, for all our experience can tell us to the contrary, the lines may possibly begin to approach each other at some distant point, and he would correct this imperfect experience by *à priori* truth. The case is precisely the reverse. The tendency of the mind unquestionably is to fancy that the two

lines *will* meet at some point; it is *experience* which corrects this tendency. There are many analogies in nature to suggest the meeting of the two lines. It is only our reflective experience which can furnish us with the proof which Dr. Whewell so triumphantly refers to ideas independent of all experience. What proof have we that two parallel lines cannot enclose space? Why this: as soon as they *assume the property of enclosing space they lose the property of straightness*: they are no longer *straight* lines but *bent* lines. In carrying out imaginatively the two straight lines into infinity, we have a tendency to make them approach; we can only correct this by a recurrence to our experience of straight lines: we must call up a distinct image of a straight line, and then we see that it cannot enclose space.

“Necessary truths,” says Dr. Whewell, “are those in which we not only learn that the proposition is true, but see that it *must* be true; in which the negation is not only false but impossible; in which we cannot even by an effort of the imagination, or in a supposition, conceive the reverse of that which is asserted. That there are such truths cannot be doubted. We may take, for example, all relations of Number. Three and two make five. We cannot conceive it otherwise. We cannot by any freak of thought imagine Three and Two to make Seven.”

That Dr. Whewell cannot by any freak of thought *now* imagine three and two to make seven, is very likely; but that he could *never* imagine this, is untrue. If he had been asked the question before he had *learned* to reckon, he would have imagined seven quite as easily as five: that is to

say, he would *not* have known the relation of three and two. Children have no intuitions of numbers: they learn them as they learn other things. "The Apples and the Marbles," says Herschell, "are put in requisition, and through the multitude of gingerbread-nuts their ideas acquire clearness, precision, and generality." But though, from its simplicity, the calculation of three added to two is with a grown man an instantaneous act; yet if you ask him suddenly how many are twice 365, he cannot answer till he has reckoned. He might certainly by a very easy "freak of thought" (i. e., by an erroneous calculation) imagine the sum total to be 720; and although when he repeats his calculation, he may discover the error, and declare 730 to be the sum total, and say, "it is a Necessary Truth that 365 added to 365 make 730," we should not in the least dispute the necessity of the truth, but presume that he himself would not dispute that he had arrived at it through Experience, viz., through his knowledge of the relations of numbers, a knowledge which he remembers to have laboriously acquired when a boy at school.

The foregoing remarks having, we trust, established that the Truths of Geometry and Arithmetic, which form one class of the so-called Necessary Truths, are not obtained *a priori*, independently of Experience, we pass on to the other class, which we would call Truths of Generalization.

Our example shall be that chosen by Kant: "Every effect must have a cause." This is not a mere *writing out* of our conceptions: it is not a mere explanation, in different terms, of what we mean. It is a wide generalization. Experience can only be Experience of individual causes and effects; and

although in our conception of an effect is certainly involved the conception of a cause, and in so far the judgment may be supposed an analytic judgment, yet if we look closer the ambiguity will disappear. The *word* effect implies as a correlative the *word* cause. But the *Thing* we see before us does not imply the existence of some *other Thing* which *caused* it; and our judgment that it must have had an antecedent cause is purely synthetic.

When we assert that every effect must have a cause, we assert that which no Experience can have warranted. Is the idea, therefore, acquired through some other channel? No; and the upholders of the doctrines of Innate Ideas, Fundamental Laws of Belief, Categories of the Understanding, and Necessary Truths, appear to us to labour under a confusion of thought which a very little well-directed analysis might have cleared up. The confusion is this. Our Experience is obviously incapable of guaranteeing the truth of any universal and necessary idea. But to assume therefore that the idea is independent of Experience, is to forget that what experience may not guarantee it may *suggest*; and the boasted universality and necessity of our ideas, is nothing more nor less than the suggestions of the understanding, operating in obedience to a law of human nature, and generalizing from particulars, converting them into universals. We will presently explain this more fully; let us now hear Dr. Whewell, whose explanation will be admitted by every Kantist.

“That this idea of cause is not derived from experience, we prove (as in former cases) by this consideration: that we can make assertions, involving this idea, which are rigorously necessary

and universal; whereas knowledge derived from experience can only be true as far as experience goes, and can never contain in itself any evidence whatever of its necessity. We assert that "every Event must have a Cause:" and this proposition we know to be true, not only probably and generally and as far as we can see: but we cannot suppose it to be false in any single instance. We are as certain of it as we are of the truths of arithmetic and geometry. We cannot doubt that it must apply to all events, past, present, and to come, in every part of the universe, just as truly as to those occurrences which we have ourselves observed.

What causes produces what effects;—what is the cause of any particular event; what will be the effect of any peculiar process; these are points on which experience may enlighten us. But that every event must have *some* cause, Experience cannot prove any more than she can disprove. She can add nothing to the evidence of the truth, however often she may exemplify it. This doctrine then cannot have been acquired by her teaching: and the Idea of Cause which the doctrine involves and on which it depends, cannot have come into our minds from the region of observation."*

There is one minor point in this argument which we must notice first. Dr. Whewell says that the proposition "every event must have a cause," cannot possibly be false in any one instance. We think there is one, which he himself would admit; but to make it clear we must substitute an equivalent for "event." The abstract formula of

* 'Philos. Ind.,' &c., vol. i. p. 159.

causation is this: "Every existence presupposes some Cause of its existence: *ex nihilo nihil fit*." And this formula is employed against the Atheists, to prove that the World could not have made itself out of Nothing, *ergo* it must have a Cause. Now the obvious answer has often been given: viz., that Cause itself must have had a Cause, and so on *ad infinitum*. Nevertheless as reason repugns such an argument; and as it declares that *somewhere* the chain of causes and effects must stop, in that very declaration it falsifies the formula of Causation, "*Every existence must have a cause.*"

Let not this be thought quibbling; it is only an exposure of the weakness of the theory of causation. If that theory be correct—if Causality is a necessary Truth, objectively as well as subjectively, the argument against Atheism falls to the ground. For, would the Atheist argue, this is the dilemma, either the chain of causes and effects must be extended to infinity; or you must stop somewhere and declare that the ultimate Existence has no cause. In the first case you fall into unlimited scepticism; in the second you fall into Atheism, because the World is an Existence of which we are assured: why, then, is not *it* the ultimate Existence? You have no right to assume any prior cause; if you must stop somewhere it is more rational to stop there.

This dilemma admits of but one escape-hole: that is in the denial of Causality being anything more than a psychological law. Curiously enough the only loophole is in the doctrine maintained by David Hume—a doctrine for so many years supposed to be the inlet of theological scepticism!

There is, in truth, no necessity in causation, except the necessity of our belief in it.

The nature of this belief we will now examine; and we shall find that it is founded entirely on experience—that it is, indeed, nothing more than our experience generalized.

To prove this we will begin with a single case of causation. A child burns his finger in the candle; he then believes that a candle will *always* burn his fingers. Now we are asked how it is that the child is led to believe that the candle will always burn his finger? And the answer usually afforded is, that he is irresistibly led to believe in the uniformity of nature; in other words, the idea of causality is a *fundamental idea*.

We answer, the child believes the candle will burn, because the experience he has of a candle is precisely *this experience* of its burning properties. Before he had burnt his finger, his experience of a candle was simply of a bright thing which set paper, &c., alight. Having now *extended his experience*, the candle is to him a bright thing which sets paper, &c., alight, and which causes pain to the finger when placed in contact with it.*

According to the well-known law of association, the flame of a candle and pain to the finger applied to it are united, and form one experience. This particular act of causation is therefore nothing but a simple experience to the child; and for the perfection of this experience it is in nowise needful to assume that the child has any belief in the "connexion of events," or in the "uniformity of the

* See p. 51-2 of this volume, where the argument is stated more fully.

laws of Nature." No fundamental idea is necessary for the *particular* belief.* Is it then, necessary for the belief in the general proposition—"Every effect must have a cause?"

We think not. In every particular act of causation our belief will be the simple result of experience. For the belief in the general proposition there is no other ground than that of reason, which, generalizing the particular acts, from them deduces the universal proposition.

Thus, belief in particular laws of causation is no more than *belief in our experience*; and if we are asked why we believe that our future experience will resemble the past, we answer, because we have no other possible belief of things than that which is formed by experience: we cannot possibly believe the candle as *not* burning us in future, because our experience of a candle has been that it *does* burn, and our beliefs cannot transcend the experience which made them.

As to the belief in universal causation, we may prove in various ways that it is the result of a mere act of generalization; and this very act itself is strictly limited by experience: that is to say, we are led by the laws of our mind to judge of the unknown according to the known. Thus, having found every event which has come under our cognizance produced by something prior, *i. e.*, cause, we conclude that every possible event must have a cause. We judge of the unknown by the known.

* This is denied by the thinkers whom we are now combating: they assume that the Fundamental Idea is necessary; but this is a mere assumption made for the purpose of saving their theory, an assumption of the very point at issue. We will presently expose the fallacy of Fundamental Ideas.

Familiar illustrations of this generalizing tendency are those rash judgments formed of nations and of classes, and formed on the experience of a single fact. Thus we heard it gravely asserted that "*all* French babies had long noses." What did this reduce itself to? To this: the person asserting it had seen a French baby, and it had a long nose. Now the only conception of a French baby in this person's mind was that of a baby with a long nose. That was the type according to which the unseen, unknown babies were judged. Not being a very reflective person, he could not divest himself of his conception, and he could not believe that his conception was not true of all French babies. Had he never seen other French babies, he would have died in the belief that they all had long noses; unless some better-informed person had corrected this conception by his larger experience. So if we had only the experience of one fact of causation, we should always believe in that fact—we should always believe that all candles would burn. To make many similar experiences of the conjunction of cause and effect, is not only to have many beliefs in particular acts of causation, it is also to collect materials for a wide generalization, and from these known conjunctions to pronounce that formula of universal conjunction applied to unknown and yet unborn events.

This latter process, however, is performed by few. All believe irresistibly in particular acts of causation. Few believe in universal causation; and those few not till after considerable reflection. Philosophers, indeed, assure us that this belief is universal; that it is an *instinct*; a law of the mind; a Fundamental Idea. But philosophers are

too apt to argue without reference to the facts: like the Frenchman, whose system being reproached as contrary to facts, replied, "So much the worse for the facts—*tant pis pour les faits!*" If philosophers would take the trouble to inquire amongst intelligent people they would find that, so far from the belief in question being instinctive and irresistible, the greater proportion have no consciousness at all of such an instinct—the belief never having once presented itself to their minds—the proposition requiring a great deal of explanation and argument before it could be received; and amongst those persons many would absolutely refuse to admit the truth of the proposition. Those who live only amongst philosophers will doubt this. We can, however, declare that it has more than once come within our experience. We have argued even with an intelligent student of chemistry, whom we found it impossible to convince that the law, "Every event having some cause," was universal. He not only could conceive it to be otherwise in the moon; but looked upon our argument as an unwarrantable assumption. The mystery of this was, that he had never read any metaphysics. So much for the instinct; so much for the irresistibility! Here is an instinctive belief, which, unlike all other instinctive beliefs, never presents itself to our consciousness; and when presented, is with the utmost difficulty accepted; and accepted only by some. Compare this with any other instinctive belief—that in the existence of our external world, for instance—and see what characters the two have in common. Ask a boor if he believes in the existence of the world, and he will deem you mad that you ask him.

Ask an ordinary man if he believe that every effect must have a cause; and the chances are that he will tell you that he does not know; he will ask you to explain *why* it must.

Nay, to leave ordinary men, and to confine ourselves to philosophers, amongst them we shall find that, with respect to one class of phenomena, more than one-half of the thinking world is firmly convinced that every effect does *not* imply a cause: the class of phenomena referred to are those of human volitions. All those who espouse the doctrine of Freedom of the Will declare that all our volitions are self-caused—that is to say, our volitions are not caused by anything external to themselves, not determined by any prior fact.

If, then, speculative men can be led to believe that one large class of phenomena is not amenable to the law of cause and effect, what becomes of the *universality* of causation? And, if speculative men can conceive the laws of cause and effect to be absent from some phenomena, and ordinary men do not conceive these laws to be universally applicable, what becomes of the *necessity*? And, if the mass of mankind require a considerable quantity of argument and explanation to make them understand the proposition, what becomes of the *instinctive belief*?

We promised to expose the *faucy* of "Fundamental Ideas," and have now arrived at a stage of the inquiry in which this may be briefly performed. It is argued that a belief in a particular act of causation is only possible on the assumption of a fundamental idea of causality inherent in the mind; that, although a child may never have had the formula, "Every effect must have a Cause," pre-

sented to his mind, nevertheless this formula is *implicitly* in his mind, otherwise he would have no reason for believing in the particular act; it must exist as a fundamental idea.

We might as rationally argue that a child cannot have an idea of a man without previously having a fundamental idea of humanity.

The fallacy lies in this: the fundamental idea of causality is a generalization. Now, of course, the general includes the particulars; but though it *includes*, yet it does not *precede* them, and the error is in supposing that it must and does precede them.

A boy, as Locke says, knows that his whole body is larger than his finger; but he knows this from his perceptions of the two, not from any knowledge of the axiom that the "whole is greater than a part." Dr. Whewell would say that he could not have such knowledge unless he had the fundamental idea; whereas, we side with Locke in asserting that the mind never *begins* with generalities, but *ends* with them; and, to say that because the general axiom implies the particular instance, or that the particular instance implies the general axiom, that therefore the axiom is independent of Experience, is to cheat one's-self with words.

The results of our argument are: I. The belief in causation is belief founded upon the experience of particular acts of causation.

II. The irresistible tendency we have to anticipate that the future course of events will resemble the past, is simply that we have experience *only* of the past, and, as we cannot *transcend* our experience, we cannot conceive things really existing

otherwise than as we have known them. From this we draw a conclusion strikingly at variance with the doctrine maintained by Kant and Dr. Whewell. We say that the very fact of our being compelled to judge of the unknown by the known—of our irresistibly anticipating that the future course of events will resemble the past—of our incapacity to believe that the same effects should not follow from the same causes—this very fact is a triumphant proof of our having no ideas *not* acquired through Experience. If we had *à priori* ideas, these, as independent of, and superior to, all Experience would enable us to judge the unknown according to some *other* standard than that of the known. But no other standard is possible for us. We cannot by any effort believe that Things will not always have the properties we have experienced in them; as long as they continue to exist we must believe them to exist as we know them.

III. Although belief in particular acts of causation is irresistible and universal, yet belief in the general proposition, "*Every* effect must have a cause," is neither irresistible nor universal, but is entertained only by a small portion of mankind. Consequently the theory of *à priori* ideas independent of all experience receives no support from the idea of Causality.

What, then, becomes of Kant's system?

We are forced to conclude, that inasmuch as his stronghold—the existence of *à priori* ideas—cannot sustain attack, the entrance of the enemy Scepticism is inevitable. Kant was not a sceptic; but he deceived himself in supposing that his system was any safeguard from Scepticism.

The veracity of Consciousness, which he had so

laboriously striven to establish, and on which his "Practical Reason" was based, is only a relative, subjective veracity. Experience is the only basis of Knowledge; and Experience, we know, leads to Scepticism.

Our exposition, already somewhat lengthy, must be closed. It has, we believe, embraced every point of importance in the Kantian doctrine; and those who desire greater detail will find it in the *Geschichte der letzten Systeme der Philosophie*, by Karl Michelet; or better still in Kant's *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, and his *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*. An English translation of the 'Kritik' has been published, and a French one by M. Tissot; but we cannot speak as to their merits.

NINTH EPOCH.

**THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE SUBJECTIVITY OF
KNOWLEDGE ONCE MORE LEADS TO IDEALISM.
—AND FIRST TO SUBJECTIVE IDEALISM.**

CHAP. I. LIFE OF FICHTE.

CHAP. II. HIS HISTORICAL POSITION.

CHAP. III. BASIS OF HIS SYSTEM.

CHAP. IV. HIS IDEALISM.

CHAP. V. APPLICATION OF IDEALISM.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF FICHTE.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE was born at Rammenau, a village lying between Bischofswerda and Pulsniz, in Upper Lusatia, on the 19th May, 1762.

His childhood, of which many touching anecdotes are related, was signalized by extraordinary intellectual capacity and great moral energy. He was a precocious child, and long before he was old enough to be sent to school he had learned many things from his father, who taught him to read, and taught him the pious songs and proverbs which formed his own simple stock of erudition. With these various studies was mixed an enchanting element : the stories of his early wanderings in Saxony and Franconia—stories to which young Johann listened with never-tiring eagerness. It was probably the vague longings which these recitals inspired, that made him wander into the fields, leaving his companions, boisterous in mirth, to roam away and enjoy the luxury of solitude, there to give vent to the indulgence of those unspeakable longings. This pale and meditative child is at ease in solitude. There he stands for hours gazing into the far distance, or in mournful yearning at the silent sky o'er-arching him. The sun goes down, and the boy returns home melancholy with the twilight. He does this so constantly that neighbours remark it ; comment on it ; and, in

after years, when that boy has become a renowned man, they recur to it with sudden pleasure, not forgetting also that they had "always said there was something remarkable in the boy." Remarkable, indeed.

Fichte's progress was so rapid that he was soon intrusted with the office of reading family prayers ; and his father cherished the hope of one day seeing him a clergyman. An event, curious in itself and very important in its influence on his subsequent career, soon occurred which favoured that hope and went far to realize it. But before we relate it we must give a touching anecdote which exhibits Fichte's heroic self-command in a very interesting light.*

The first book which fell into his hands after the Bible and Catechism, was the renowned history of 'Siegfried the Horned,' and it seized so powerfully on his imagination, that he lost all pleasure in any other employment, became careless and neglectful, and for the first time in his life was punished. Then, in the spirit of the injunction which tells us to cut off our right hand if it cause us to offend, Fichte resolved to sacrifice the beloved book, and, taking it in his hand, walked slowly to a stream flowing past the house, with the intention of throwing it in. Long he lingered on the bank, ere he could muster courage for this first self-conquest of his life ; but at length, summoning all his resolution, he flung it into the water. His fortitude gave way as he saw the treasure, too dearly loved, floating

* For both anecdotes we are indebted to a very interesting article on Fichte which appeared in the 'Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 71.' We have abridged the passages ; otherwise the narrative is unaltered.

away for ever, and he burst into a passionate flood of tears. Just at this moment the father arrived on the spot, and the weeping child told what he had done ; but either from timidity or incapacity to explain his feelings, was silent as to his true motive. Irritated at this treatment of his present, Fichte's father inflicted upon him an unusually severe punishment, and this occurrence formed a fitting prelude to his after life, in which he was so often misunderstood, and the actions springing from the purest convictions of duty, were exactly those for which he had most to suffer. When a sufficient time had elapsed for the offence to be in some measure forgotten, the father brought home another of these seducing books ; but Fichte dreaded being again exposed to the temptation, and begged that it might rather be given to some of the other children.

It was about this time that the other event before alluded to occurred. The clergyman of the village, who had taken a fancy to Gottlieb, and often assisted in his instruction, happened one day to ask him how much he thought he could remember of the sermon of the preceding day. Fichte made the attempt, and to the astonishment of the pastor, succeeded in giving a very tolerable account of the course of argument, as well as of the texts quoted in its illustration. The circumstance was mentioned to the Count von Hoffmansegg, the lord of the village, and when one day another nobleman, the Baron von Mittiz, who was on a visit at the castle, happened to express his regret at having been too late for the sermon on the Sunday morning, he was told, half in jest, that it was of little consequence, for that there was a boy in the village who could repeat it all from memory. Little Gottlieb was sent for, and

soon arrived in a clean smock frock and bearing a large nosegay, such as his mother was accustomed to send to the castle occasionally as a token of respect. He answered the first questions put to him with his accustomed quiet simplicity; but when asked to repeat as much as he could recollect of the morning's sermon, his voice and manner became more animated, and, as he proceeded, entirely forgetting the presence of the formidable company, he became so fervid and abundant in his eloquence, that the count thought it necessary to interrupt him, lest the playful tone of the circle should be destroyed by the serious subjects of the sermon. The young preacher had, however, made some impression on his auditory; the baron made inquiries concerning him, and the clergyman, wishing for nothing more than an opportunity to serve his favourite, gave such an account that the baron determined to undertake the charge of his education. He departed, carrying his *protégé* with him, to his castle of Siebeneichen, in Saxony, near Meissen, on the Elbe; and the heart of the poor village boy sank, as he beheld the gloomy grandeur of the baronial hall, and the mountains and dark oak forests by which it was surrounded. His first sorrow, his severest trial, had come in the shape of what a mis-judging world might regard as a singular piece of good fortune, and so deep a dejection fell on him, as seriously to endanger his health. His patron here manifested the really kindly spirit by which he had been actuated; he entered into the feelings of the child, and removed him from the lordly mansion to the abode of a country clergyman in the neighbourhood, who was passionately fond of children, and had none of his own. Under the truly paternal care of this excellent man, Fichte passed some of the

happiest years of his life, and to its latest day looked back to them with tenderness and gratitude. The affectionate care of this amiable couple, their sharing with him every little domestic pleasure, and treating him in every respect as if he had been indeed their son, was always remembered by him with the liveliest sensibility, and certainly exercised a most favourable influence on his character.

In this family, Fichte received his first instruction in the languages of antiquity, in which, however, he was left much to his own efforts, seldom receiving what might be called a regular lesson. This plan, though it undoubtedly invigorated and sharpened his faculties, left him imperfectly acquainted with grammar, and retarded, in some measure, his subsequent progress at Schulpforte. His kind preceptor soon perceived the insufficiency of his own attainments for advancing the progress of so promising a pupil, and urged his patron to obtain for Fichte, what appeared to him the advantages of a high school. He was accordingly sent, first to Meissen, and afterwards to the seminary at Schulpforte.

There the system of flogging existed in full force, and with its usual consequences, tyranny on the one side, dissimulation and cunning on the other. Even Fichte, whose native strength of character, in some measure, guarded him from evil influences that might have been fatal to a mind of a feebler order, confesses that his life at Schulpforte was anything but favourable to his integrity. He found himself gradually reconciled to the necessity of ruling his conduct by the opinion of the little community around him, and compelled to practise occasionally the same artifices as others, if he would not with all his talents and industry be always left behind.

Into this microcosm of contending forces the

boy of thirteen, nurtured amidst lonely mountains and silent forests, now found himself thrown. The monastic gloom of the buildings contrasted at first most painfully with the joyous freedom of fields and woods, where he had been accustomed to wander at will; but still more painfully the solitude of the moral desert. Shy and shrinking within himself he stood, and the tears which furnished only subjects of mockery to his companions were forced back, or taught to flow only in secret. Here, however, he learned the useful lesson of self-reliance, so well, though so bitterly taught, by want of sympathy in those around us, and from this time to the close of his life it was never forgotten. It was natural that the idea of escape should occur to a boy thus circumstanced, but the dread of being retaken and brought back in disgrace to Schulpforte occasioned hesitation. Whilst brooding over this project, it happened that he met with a copy of 'Robinson Crusoe,' and his enthusiasm—the enthusiasm of thirteen, was kindled into a blaze. The desert should be his dwelling-place! On some far-off island of the ocean, beyond the reach of mankind, and of the students of Schulpforte, he would pass golden days of freedom and happiness. It was a common boyish notion, but the manner in which it was carried into execution shows traces of the character of the individual. Nothing could have been easier than for him to have taken his departure unperceived on one of the days when the scholars were allowed to go to the playground; but he scorned to steal away in secret; he would have this step appear as the result of necessity and deliberate determination. He, therefore, made a formal declaration to his superior, a lad who had made a

cruel and oppressive use of the brief authority intrusted him, that he would no longer endure the treatment he received, but would leave the place at the first opportunity. As may be supposed, the announcement was received with sneers and laughter, and Fichte now considered himself in all honour free to fulfil his resolution. It was easy to find an opportunity, and accordingly having taken the precaution to study his proposed route on the map, he set off, and trudged on stoutly on the road to Naumburg. As he walked, however, he bethought himself of a saying of his beloved old pastor, that one should never begin an important undertaking without a prayer for Divine assistance; he turned, therefore, and kneeling down on a green hillock by the road-side implored, in the innocent sincerity of his heart, the blessing of Heaven on his wanderings. As he prayed it occurred to the new Robinson that his disappearance must occasion grief to his parents, and his joy in his wild scheme was gone in a moment. "Never, perhaps, to see his parents again!" This terrible thought suddenly presented itself with such force that he resolved to retrace his steps, and meet all the punishments that might be in store for him, "that he might look once more on the face of his mother."

On his return, he met those who had been sent in pursuit of him; for as soon as he had been missed, the "Obergesell" had given information of what had passed between them. When carried before the rector, Fichte immediately confessed that he had intended to escape, and at the same time related the whole story with such straightforward simplicity and openness, that the rector became interested for him, and not only remitted his punishment, but chose

for him, among the elder lads, another master, who treated him with the greatest kindness, and to whom he became warmly attached.

Fichte had become a *Candidatus Theologiæ*, when his patron died, and with him died all hopes of being a clergyman. His prospects were gloomy in the extreme; but he was relieved from anxiety by being offered the situation of private tutor in a family in Switzerland. He soon afterwards made acquaintance with Lavater, and some other literary men. He also formed an attachment, which was to last him through life, with a niece of Klopstock.

Fichte's tutorship was remarkable. The parents of his pupils, although neither perfectly comprehending his plans, nor approving of that part which they did comprehend, were nevertheless such admirers of his moral character—they stood in such respectful awe of him—that they were induced to submit their own conduct with respect to their children to his judgment. We presume that all well-meaning tutors occasionally make suggestions to parents respecting certain points in their conduct towards the children; but Fichte's plan is, we fancy, quite unexampled in the history of such relations. He kept a journal which he laid before them every week, and in which he had noted the faults of conduct of which they had been guilty. This lets us into the secret of Fichte's firm and truthful character, as much as anything we know about him. It was from such a soil that we might expect to find growing the moral doctrines which afterwards made his name illustrious. But this domestic censorship could not last long; it lasted for two years; and that it should have lasted so long is, as has been remarked, strong evidence of

the respect in which his character was held. But it was irksome, insupportable, and ended, at length, in mutual dissatisfaction. He was forced to seek some other mode of subsistence. He went to Leipzig, where he gave private lessons in Greek and Philosophy, and became acquainted with the writings of Kant. This was an important event to him. Hear in what terms he speaks of it:—

I have been living, for the last four or five months in Leipzig, the happiest life I can remember. I came here with my head full of grand projects, which all burst one after another, like so many soap-bubbles, without leaving me so much as the froth. At first this troubled me a little, and, half in despair, I took a step which I ought to have taken long before. Since I could not alter what was without me, I resolved to try to alter what was within. I threw myself into philosophy—the Kantian videlicet—and here I found the true antidote for all my evils, and joy enough into the bargain. The influence which this philosophy, particularly the ethical part of it (which, however, is unintelligible without a previous study of the ‘*Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*’), has had upon my whole system of thought; the revolution which it has effected in my mind is not to be described. To you especially I owe the declaration that I now believe, with my whole heart, in free will, and that I see that under this supposition alone can duty, virtue, and morality have any existence. From the opposite proposition of the necessity of all human actions must flow the most injurious consequences to society; and it may, in fact, be in part the source of the corrupt morals of the higher classes which we hear so much of. Should any one adopt-

ing it remain virtuous, we must look for the cause of his purity elsewhere than in the innocuousness of the doctrine. With many it is their want of logical consequence in their actions.

"I am furthermore well convinced, that this life is not the land of enjoyment but of labour and toil, and that every joy is granted to us but to strengthen us for further exertion; that the management of our own fate is by no means required of us, but only self-culture. I trouble myself, therefore, not at all concerning the things that are without, I endeavour not to appear but to be. And to this perhaps I owe the deep tranquillity I enjoy; my external position, however, is well enough suited to such a frame of mind. I am no man's master, and no man's slave. As to prospects I have none at all, for the constitution of the church here does not suit me, nor, to say the truth, that of the people either. As long as I can maintain my present independence I shall certainly do so. I have been for some time working at an explanatory abridgment of Kant's '*Kritik der Urtheilskraft*' (Critical Inquiry into the Faculty of Judgment), but I am afraid I shall be obliged to come before the public in a very immature state, to prevent being forestalled by a hundred vamped up publications. Should the child ever make its appearance I will send it to you."*

It was in consequence of his admiration of Kant, that, after several ineffectual attempts to settle himself, he went to Königsberg. Instead of a letter of introduction, Fichte presented Kant with a work, written in eight days, and which bore the

* It was never printed; probably because, as he here anticipates, he was forestalled.

title of 'A Critique of every possible Revelation.' Kant at once recognised his peer, and received him warmly. But Kant himself, though celebrated, was poor and uninfluential. Fichte's affairs were desperate. We have his own confession in the fragment of a journal which he kept at the time.

"*28th August.*—I yesterday began to revise my 'Critique.' In the course of my meditation some new and excellent ideas were excogitated, which convinced me that my work was superficial. I endeavoured to carry out my investigation to-day; but my imagination led me so far away, that I could do nothing. I have reckoned my finances, and find that I have just enough to subsist on for a fortnight. It is true this is not the first time in my life that I have found myself in such an embarrassment, but I was then in my own country; besides, in growing older, one's sense of honour becomes more delicate, and distress is more and more of a hardship. . . . I have not been able to make any resolution. I certainly shall not speak on the subject to M. Borowsky, to whom Kant has given me an introduction. If I speak to any one it shall be to Kant himself.

"*1st Sept.*—I have made a resolution which I must communicate to Kant. A situation as tutor, however reluctantly I might accept it, does not even offer itself; while, on the other hand, the incertitude in which I am placed does not allow me to work. I must return home. I can perhaps borrow from Kant the small sum necessary for my journey. I went to him to-day for that purpose, but my courage failed me. I resolved to write to him.

"*2nd Sept.*—I finished my letter to Kant, and sent it.

"3rd Sept.—Received an invitation to dinner from Kant. He received me with his usual cordiality; but informed me that it would be quite out of his power to accede to my request for another fortnight. Such amiable frankness!

"I have done nothing lately; but I shall set myself to work, and leave the rest to Providence.

"6th Sept.—Dined with Kant, who proposed that I should sell the MS. of my 'Critique' to Hartung the bookseller. 'It is admirably written,' said he, when I told him I was going to rewrite it. Is that true? It is Kant who says so.

"12th Sept.—I wanted to work to-day; but could do nothing. How will this end? What will become of me a week hence? Then all my money will be gone."

These extracts will not be read without emotion. They paint a curious picture in the life of our philosopher: a life which was little more than a perpetual and energetic combat.

The 'Critique' was published anonymously, and gained immense applause; partly, no doubt, because it was generally mistaken for the production of Kant himself. The celebrity he acquired when the authorship was disclosed was the means of procuring him the chair of Philosophy at Jena, the offer of which was made him towards the end of 1793.

Jena was then the leading University of Germany; and Fichte might flatter himself that at length he had a settled position, in which he might calmly develop his scientific views. But his was a Fighter's destiny. Even here, at Jena, he found himself soon opposing and opposed. His endeavours to instil a higher moral feeling into the students—

his anxiety for their better culture—only brought on him the accusation of endeavouring to undermine the religious institutions of his country ;* and his speculative views brought on him the charge of Atheism.

Atheism is a grave charge, and yet how lightly made ! The history of opinion abounds in instances of this levity ; yet scarcely ever was a charge less groundless in appearance than that against Fichte ; but it was only in appearance. Nevertheless the cry was raised, and he had to battle against it. It is understood, that the Government would have been willing to overlook the publication of the work which raised this cry, if Fichte had made any sort of explanatory modification ; but he would not hear of it ; tendered his resignation, and soon afterwards found an asylum in Prussia, where he occupied the Chair at Erlangen, and afterwards at Berlin. From his career at Berlin we will select one incident typical of his character.

It is 1813. The students are assembled in crowds to hear their favourite professor, who is to lecture that day upon duty—on that duty whose ideal grandeur his impassioned eloquence has revealed to them. Fichte arrives, calm and modest. He lectures with his usual dignified calmness, rising into fiery bursts of eloquence, but governed by the same marvellous rigour of logic as before. He leads them from the topic to the present state of affairs. On them he grows still more animated ; the rolling of drums without frequently drowning

* What bitter satire ! and yet so constantly is this charge made against those whose intentions are purer than their neighbours, that the satire is a common-place.

his voice, and giving him fresh spirit. He points to the bleeding wounds of his country; he warms with hatred against oppressors; and enforces it as the duty of every one to lend his single arm to save his country.

"This course of lectures," he exclaims, "will be suspended till the end of the campaign. We will resume them in a free country, or die in the attempt to recover her freedom." Loud shouts respondent ring through the hall; clapping of hands and stamping of feet make answer to the rolling drums without; every German heart there present is moved, as at the sound of a trumpet. Fichte descends; passes through the crowd; and places himself in the ranks of a corps of volunteers then departing for the army. It is the commencement of the memorable campaign of 1813.*

It was in this campaign that his noble wife distinguished herself in a truly womanly manner. We must trespass again on the 'Foreign Quarterly' for the account of her conduct and of Fichte's end.

"Hostilities were now openly commenced; and although the victories of Grossbeer and Dennewitz averted the threatened danger of Berlin, its nearness to the scene of action, and the many sanguinary conflicts that took place filled the hospitals with the sick and wounded; and at length, the public institutions becoming entirely unequal to the demands made upon them, the authorities, through the public journals, called on the inhabit-

* We have here, as on some other occasions, taken the liberty of transcribing a passage from one of our former lacubrations.

ants to come to their assistance with extraordinary contributions, and the women to take charge of the sick. Among the foremost of those who devoted themselves to this noble and Christian duty, was the wife of Fichte, who, with the full consent and approbation of her husband, engaged heart and soul in this sacred vocation. She devoted her days to the distribution of clothes, food, and medicine, and to pious cares around the beds of the unknown sick and dying; and after she returned late on a winter's evening to her home, often again went out to collect contributions from her friends and acquaintances.

“After about five months' uninterrupted exertions of this kind in the hospitals, she began, however, to feel alarming symptoms of illness, and in January, 1814, was attacked by a violent nervous fever, which had prevailed among the wounded. It soon attained such a height, as to leave scarce a hope of recovery; and on the very day when she was in the greatest peril, Fichte, who had been engaged in close and anxious attendance upon her during her illness, was compelled to leave her, to deliver the first of a course of philosophical lectures, which he had now recommenced. With wonderful self-command, he continued to speak for two hours on the most abstract subjects, scarcely hoping to find, on his return, his beloved companion still alive. This was, however, the crisis of her illness; and those who witnessed the transports of joy and gratitude with which he hailed the symptoms of recovery, were able to estimate the power of self-control he had exercised. It was, probably, at that moment, that innocently and un-

consciously she communicated to him the fatal infection. On the following day, the commencement of a serious indisposition was evident, but Fichte could not be induced to relax any of his customary exertions. The continued sleeplessness, however, soon produced its usual effect on his mental faculties, and in the course of fourteen days the attack terminated fatally. His death was worthy of his life, for he fell a sacrifice to conjugal affection and Christian duty" (*'Beati qui in Domino moriuntur.'*)*

There are few characters which inspire more admiration than that of Fichte; we must all admire "that cold, colossal, adamantine spirit standing erect and clear, like a Cato Major among degenerate men; fit to have been the teacher of the Stoa and to have discoursed of beauty and virtue in the groves of Academe! So robust an intellect, a soul so calm, so lofty, massive, and immoveable has not mingled in philosophical discussion since the time of Luther. For the man rises before us amid contradiction and debate like a granite mountain amid clouds and winds. Ridicule of the best that could be commanded has been already tried against him; but it could not avail. What was the wit of a thousand wits to him? The cry of a thousand choughs assailing that old cliff of granite; seen from the summit, these, as they winged the midway air, showed scarce so gross as beetles and their cry was seldom even audible. Fichte's opinions may be true or false; but his character as a thinker can

* *'Foreign Quarterly,'* No. 71, p. 140. The article is well worth reading; it is founded on Fichte's *'Leben und Briefwechsel,'* 1836, edited by Fichte's son; to which source all are referred who desire further details respecting the noble thinker's life.

be slightly valued only by those who know it ill; and as a man approved by action and suffering, in his life and in his death, he ranks with a class of men who were common only in better ages than ours." With this eloquent tribute, from Thomas Carlyle, we close our memoir of Johann Gottlieb Fichte.

CHAPTER II.

FICHTE'S HISTORICAL POSITION.

THE "Criticism" of Kant, although really leaving scepticism in possession of the field, was nevertheless believed to have indicated a new domain, in which a refuge might be found. The thought soon suggested itself that on this domain an indestructible temple might be erected. Kant had driven the piles deep down into the earth—a secure foundation was made; but Kant had declined building.

Jacobi, for one, saw in the principles of "criticism" a path on which he could travel. He maintained that just as sense was, according to Kant, a faculty whereby we perceived material things, so also was reason a sense, a faculty, whereby we perceive the supersensual.

It was, indeed, soon evident that men would not content themselves with the mere negation to which Kant had reduced our knowledge of things *per se*. It was the positive part of his system they accepted and endeavoured to extend.

This attempt forms the matter of all the subsequent history of German Philosophy till Hegel. We will however briefly state the nature of the discussions, which the result of Kant's system had rendered imperative.

Kant had postulated the existence of an object

as the necessary correlate to a subject. Knowledge was both objective and subjective; but inasmuch as it was thus inseparably twofold it could never penetrate the essence of things—it could never know the object—it could only know phenomena. Hence the problem was:—

What is the relation of object and subject?

To solve this, it was necessary to penetrate the essence of things, to apprehend noumena. All the efforts of men were therefore to be directed towards this absolute science.

The ground of all certitude being in the *à priori* ideas, an attempt was made to construct *à priori* the whole system of human knowledge.

The ego was the necessary basis of the new edifice. Consciousness, as alone certain, was the ground upon which absolute science must rest.

Fichte's position is here clearly marked out. His sole object was to construct a science out of consciousness, and thereon to found a system of morals.

Let us at the outset request the reader to give no heed to any of the witticisms which he may hear, or which may suggest themselves to him on a hasty consideration of Fichte's opinions. That they are not those of ordinary thinkers we admit; that they are repugnant to all "common sense," we must also admit; that they are false, we believe: but we also believe them to have been laborious products of an earnest mind, the consequences of admitted premises, drawn with singular audacity and subtlety, and no mere caprices of ingenious speculation—no paradoxes of an acute, but trifling mind.

It was within him that he found a lamp to light

him on his path. Deep in the recesses of his soul, beneath all understanding, superior to all logical knowledge, there lay a faculty by which truth, absolute truth, might be known.

"I have found the organ," he says in his *Bestimmung des Menschen*, "by which to apprehend all reality. It is not the understanding, for all knowledge supposes some higher knowledge on which it rests, and of this ascent there is no end. It is Faith, that voluntarily reposing on views naturally presenting themselves to us, *because* through these views alone we can fulfil our destiny, which sees our knowledge, and pronounces that 'it is good,' and raises it to certainty and conviction. It is no knowledge, but a resolution of the will to admit this knowledge. This is no mere verbal distinction, but a true and deep one, pregnant with the most important consequences. Let me for ever hold fast by it. All my conviction is but faith, and it proceeds from the will and not from the understanding; from will also, and not from the understanding, must all the true culture proceed. Let the first only be firmly directed towards the Good, the latter will of itself apprehend the True. Should the latter be exercised and developed while the former remains neglected, nothing can come of it but a facility in vain and endless sophistical subtleties refining away into the absolutely void inane. I know that every seeming truth, born of thought alone, and not ultimately resting on faith, is false and spurious, for knowledge, purely and simply such, when carried to its utmost consequences leads to the conviction that we can know nothing! Such knowledge never finds anything in the con-

clusions, which it has not previously placed in the premises by faith, and even then its conclusions are not always correct. . . . Every human creature born into the world has unconsciously seized on the reality which exists for him alone through this intuitive faith. If in mere knowledge—in mere perception and reflection—we can discover no ground for regarding our mental presentations as more than mere pictures, why do we all nevertheless regard them as more, and imagine for them a basis, a *substratum* independent of all modifications? If we all possess the capacity and the instinct to go beyond this natural view of things, why do so few of us follow this instinct, or exercise this capacity, nay, why do we even resist with a sort of bitterness when we are urged towards this path? What holds us imprisoned in these natural boundaries? Not inferences of our reason, for there are none which could do this. It is our deep interest in reality that does this—in the good that we are to produce—in the common and the sensuous that we are to enjoy. From this interest can no one who lives detach himself, and just as little from the faith which forces itself upon him simultaneously with his existence. We are all born in faith, and he who is blind follows blindly the irresistible attraction. He who sees follows by sight, and believes because he will believe.”*

Here the limit, set by Kant, is overleaped: a knowledge of realities is affirmed. But it is not enough to affirm such a knowledge; we must prove it. To prove this is the mission of Philosophy.

* We adopt the translation of Mrs. Percy Sinnett: *Destination of Man*. London, 1846.

Fichte, who thought himself a true Kantist, although Kant very distinctly and publicly repudiated him, Fichte declared that the materials for a science had been discovered by Kant; nothing more was needed than a systematic co-ordination of these materials: and this task he undertook in his famous Doctrine of Science (*Wissenschaftslehre*). In this he endeavoured to construct *a priori* all knowledge.

CHAPTER III.

BASIS OF FICHTE'S SYSTEM.

WE are supposed to perceive external objects through the ideas which these objects excite in us. But this assumption is not warranted by the facts of consciousness. What is the fundamental fact? It is that I have in my mind a certain idea. This, and this only, is primitively given. When we leave this fact in quest of an explanation, we are forced to admit either that this idea is spontaneously evolved *by me*; or else some *not me*—something different from myself—has excited it *in me*. Idealism or Dualism? choose between them.

Kant, unwilling to embrace idealism, and unable to conceive how the ego spontaneously evolved within itself ideas of that which it regarded as different from itself, postulated the existence of a non-ego, but declared that we knew nothing of it. In this he followed Locke and the majority of philosophers.

Truly, said Fichte, we know nothing of it; we can only know that which passes within ourselves. Only so much as we are *conscious* of, can we know; but in consciousness there is no object given, there is only an idea given. Are we forced by the very laws of our reason to suppose that there is a non-

ego existing—are we forced to assume that these ideas are images of something *out* of us and independent of us? To what does this dilemma bring us? Simply to this: that the very assumption, here called a necessary consequence of our mental constitution—this non-ego, which must be postulated, is, after all, nothing but a postulate of our reason; is therefore a *product of the ego*. It is the ego which thus *creates the necessity* for a non-ego; it is the ego which thus *answering to the necessity, creates the non-ego wanted*. Ideas and nothing but ideas are given in the primitive fact of consciousness. These are the products of the *activity* of the ego; and not, as is so commonly asserted, the products of the *passivity* of the ego. The soul is no passive mirror reflecting images. It is an active principle creating them. The soul is no lifeless *receptivity*. Were it not brimming over with life and activity, perception would be impossible. One stone does not perceive another. A mould does not perceive the liquid that is poured into it.

Consciousness is in its very essence an activity. Well, then, if in its activity it produces images, and if by the laws of its nature it is forced to assume that these images have some substratum, what is this assumption but *another* form of the soul's activity? If the ego is conscious of its changes, and yet is forced to attribute these changes to some external cause—what is this very act of assuming an external cause but *the pure act of the ego? another change in the ego?*

You admit that we cannot know *substances*; all our knowledge is limited to *accidents*—to phenomena. But, you say, you are forced to *assume* a substance as the basis of these accidents—a nou-

menon as that whereby phenomena are possible; and yet you cannot *know* this noumenon.

I answer: if you cannot *know* it, your assumption, *as the mere product of your reason*, is nothing more nor less *than another form of the activity of the ego*. It is *you* who assume; and you assume *what* you call substance.

Substance is nothing but the *synthesis of accidents*. And it is a mental synthesis.

Thus Fichte founded Idealism upon the basis of consciousness, which was the admitted basis of all certitude; and not only founded idealism, but reduced the ego to an activity, and all *knowledge* to an *act*.

The activity of the ego is, of course, an assumption; but it is the only assumption necessary for the construction of a science. That once admitted, the existence of the non-ego, as a product of the ego, follows as a necessary consequence.

Every one will admit that $A=A$; or that *A is A*. This is an axiom which is known intuitively, and has no need of proof. It is the proposition of absolute identity (*Satz der Identität*). It is absolutely true. In admitting this to be absolutely true, we ascribe to the mind a faculty of knowing absolute truth.

But in saying *A equals A*, we do not affirm the *existence* of *A*; we only affirm that *if A exist, then it must equal A*. And the axiom teaches us not that *A exists*; but that there is a necessary relation between a certain *if* and *then*; and this necessary relation we will call *X*. But this relation, this *X*, is only *in* the ego, comes only *from* the ego. It is the ego that judges in the preceding axiom that $A=A$; and it judges by means of *X*.

To reduce this to language a little less scholastic we may say that, in every judgment which the mind makes, the act of judging is an act of the ego.

But as the X is wholly in the ego, so therefore is A in the ego, and is posited by the ego. And by this we see that there is *something* in the ego which is for ever one and the same, and that is the X. Hence the formula "I am I: ego=ego."

We come here to the *Cogito, ergo sum*, of Descartes, as the basis of all certitude. The ego posits itself, and is by means of this very self-positing. When I say "I am," I affirm in consciousness my existence; and this affirmation of my consciousness is the condition of my existence. The ego is therefore at one and the same time both the activity and the product of activity; precisely as thought is both the thinking activity, and the product thought.

We will, for the present, spare the reader any further infliction of such logical abstractions. He will catch in the foregoing a glimpse of Fichte's method, and be in some way able to estimate the strength of the basis on which idealism reposes.

The great point Fichte has endeavoured to establish is the identity of being and thought—of existence and consciousness—of object and subject. And he establishes this by means of the ego considered as essentially an activity.

Hence the conclusion drawn in the practical part of his philosophy that the true destination of man is not thought, but action, which is thought realised, "I am free," he says. That is, the revelation of consciousness. "I am free; and it is not merely my action, but the free determination of my will to obey the voice of conscience, that

becides all my worth. More brightly does the everlasting world now rise before me; and the fundamental laws of its order are more clearly revealed to my mental sight. My *will alone*, lying hid in the obscure depths of my soul, is the first link in a chain of consequences stretching through the invisible realms of spirit, as in this terrestrial world, the action itself, a certain movement communicated to matter, is the first link in a material chain of cause and effect, encircling the whole system. The will is the efficient cause, the living principle of the world of spirit, as motion is of the world of sense. I stand between two worlds, the one visible, in which the act alone avails, and the intention matters not at all; the other invisible and incomprehensible, acted on only by the will. In both these worlds I am an effective force. The Divine life, as alone the finite mind can conceive it, is self-forming, self-representing will, clothed, to the mortal eye, with multitudinous sensuous forms, flowing through me and through the whole immeasurable universe, here streaming through my veins and muscles—there, pouring its abundance into the tree, the flower, the grass. The dead, heavy mass of inert matter, which did but fill up nature, has disappeared, and, in its stead, there rushes by the bright, everlasting flood of life and power, from its Infinite Source.

“The eternal will is the Creator of the world, as he is the Creator of the finite reason. Those who will insist that the world must have been created out of a mass of inert matter, which must always remain inert and lifeless, like a vessel made by human hands, know neither the world nor Him. The Infinite Reason alone exists in himself—the

finite in him ; in our minds alone has he created a world, or at least that by and through which it becomes unfolded to us. In his light we behold the light, and all that it reveals. Great, living Will ! whom no words can name, and no conception embrace ! well may I lift my thoughts to thee, for I can think only in thee. In thee, the Incomprehensible, does my own existence, and that of the world, become comprehensible to me ; all the problems of being are solved, and the most perfect harmony reigns. I veil my face before thee and lay my finger on my lips."

CHAPTER IV.

FICHTE'S IDEALISM.

THE ground-principle of Fichte's idealism having been given, we have now to see how he avoids the natural objections which rise against such a doctrine. But first let us notice how this deification of personality was at once the most natural product of such a mind as Fichte's, and the best adapted to the spirit of the age which produced it. His doctrine was an inspiration of that ardent and exalted spirit which stirred the heart of Germany, and made the campaign of 1813 an epoch in history. What was Germany then, as now, most deficient in? It was will. They had armies, and these armies were headed by experienced generals. But among them there was scarcely another beyond the impetuous Blücher, who had that greatest of all heroic (or villainous) qualities, will. They were beaten and beaten. At length they were roused. A series of insults had roused them. They rose as a man to fight for fatherland, and in their ranks was Fichte, who by deed as well as doctrine sought to convince them that in will lay man's divinity.

The question being *What is the relation of Object and Subject?* And Fichte's solution being *Object and Subject are identical*; it followed from his position that inasmuch as an Object and a Subject—a Non-Ego and an Ego—were given

in Knowledge, and the distinction between them by all men supposed to be real, the origin of this distinction must arise in one of two ways: either the Ego must posit the Non-Ego, wilfully and consciously (in which case mankind would never suppose the distinction to be a real distinction); or else the *Ego must cause the Non-Ego to be*, and must do so necessarily and unconsciously.

How does Fichte solve the problem? He assumes that the existence of the very Ego itself is *determined** by the Non-Ego; and in this way. To be, and to be conscious, are the same. The existence of the Ego depends upon its consciousness. But to be conscious of Self is at the same time to be conscious of Not-Self; the correlates Self and Not-Self are given in the same act of consciousness.

But how is it that we attribute reality to Not-Self? Just as we attribute reality to Self, viz., by an act of Consciousness. Not-Self is given in Consciousness as a *reality*, and therefore we cannot suppose it to be a phantom.

We may pause here to remark how all the witticisms against Idealism fall to the ground. The wits assume that when it is said the World is produced by the ego, therefore must this World be a phantom. Now nobody ever believed that external objects had no reality; the only possible doubt is as to whether they have any reality *independent* of mind.

* The German word *bestimmen*, which we are forced to translate to determine, is of immense use to the metaphysicians; we would gladly have substituted some other, could we have found one to represent the meaning. To determine in philosophy does not mean to resolve (as in English), but to render definite. Chaos, when *determined*, is the created world.

In consciousness we have a twofold fact, viz., the fact of self, and the fact of not-self, indissolubly given in one. We conclude, therefore, that consciousness—that the ego—is partly self-determined, and partly determined by not-self. Let us suppose the entire reality of the ego (that is, in its identity of subject and object) represented by the number ten. The ego, conscious of five of its parts—or, to speak with Fichte—*positing* five, does by that very act posit five parts *negatively* in itself. But how is it that the Ego can posit a negation in itself? It does so by the very act of consciousness; in the act of separating five from ten, the five remaining are left passive. The negation is, therefore, the passivity of the Ego. This seems to lead to the contradiction that the Ego, which was defined as an Activity, is at the same time active and passive. The solution of this difficulty is that it is Activity which determines Passivity, and reciprocally. Let us suppose the absolute reality as a Sphere; this is entirely in the Ego, and has a certain quantity. Every quantity less than this totality, will, of necessity, be negation, passivity. In order that a less quantity should be compared with the totality and so opposed to it, it is necessary there should be some relation between them, and this is in the idea of divisibility. In the absolute totality, as such, there are no parts; but this totality may be compared with parts and distinguished from it. Passivity is therefore a determinate quantity of Activity, a quantity compared with the totality. In regard to the Ego as absolute, the Ego as limited is passive; in the relation of Ego as limited to the Non-Ego, the Ego is active and the Non-Ego passive. And thus are activity and passivity reciprocally determined.

The result of this and much more reasoning is that when mankind attribute to Objects a real existence they are correct; but they are incorrect in supposing that the Object is independent of the Subject: it is identical with the Subject. The common sense belief is therefore correct enough. It is when we would rise above this belief, and endeavour to philosophise that we fall into error. All the philosophers have erred, not in assuming the *reality* of Objects, but in assuming the reality of *two* distinct, disparate existences, Matter and Mind; whereas we have seen that there is only one existence, having the twofold aspect of Object and Subject.

Nor is the distinction unimportant. If Dualism be accepted, we have no refuge from Scepticism. If we are to believe that *Dinge an Sich* exist—that Matter exists independently of Mind, exists *per se*—then are we doomed to admit only a knowledge of phenomena as possible. The Things in themselves we can never know; we can only know their effects upon us. Our knowledge is relative, and never can embrace the absolute truth.

But if Idealism be accepted, the ordinary belief of men is not only respected but confirmed; for this belief is that we *do* know things in themselves, and that the things we know *do* exist. The Dualist forces you to admit that you *cannot* know Things in themselves; and that your belief in their existence is merely the postulate of your Reason, and is not *immediately* given in the facts of Consciousness. The Idealist, on the contrary, gives you an *immediate* knowledge of Things in themselves, consequently opens to you the domain of absolute Truth. He only differs from your view, in saying

that these Things, which you immediately know, are part and parcel of yourself; and it is *because* you and they are indissolubly united, that immediate knowledge is possible.

"But," says Realism, "I know that Objects are altogether independent of *me*. I did not create them. I found them there *out* of me. The proof of this is that if, after looking at a tree, I turn away, or shut my eyes, the image of the tree is annihilated, but the tree itself remains."

"No," answers Idealism, "the tree itself does not remain: for the tree is but a phenomenon or collection of phenomena—the tree is a Perception, and all perceptions are subjective. You stare? You suppose that every one must admit that our *perceptions* are different from their *objects*. But are they different? that is precisely the question at issue; and you assume it. Let us be cautious. What is an object—a Tree for instance? Tell me what does your Consciousness inform you of? Let me hear the fact, the whole fact, and no *inference* from the fact. Is not the *object* (Tree) one and the same as your *perception* (Tree)? Is not the tree a mere name for your perception? Does not your Consciousness distinctly tell you that the Form, Colour, Solidity, and Smell of the Tree are *in you*—are affections of your Subject?"

"I admit that," replies Realism; "but although these are *in me*, they are caused by something *out of me*. Consciousness tells me that very plainly."

"Does it so? I tell you that Consciousness has no such power. It tells you of its own changes; it cannot transcend itself to tell you anything about that which causes its changes."

"But I am irresistibly compelled to believe," says Realism, "that there are things which exist *out* of me; and this belief, because irresistible, is true."

"Stop! you run on too fast," replies Idealism; "your belief is not what you describe it. You are not irresistibly compelled to believe that things exist, which said things lie *underneath* all their appearances, and must ever remain unknown. This is no instinctive belief; it is a philosophic inference. Your belief simply is, that certain things, coloured, odorous, extended, sapid, and solid, exist; and so they do. But you infer that they exist *out* of you? Rash inference! Have you not admitted that colour, odour, taste, extension, &c., are but modifications of your sentient being; and if they exist *in* you, how can they exist *out* of you? They do not: they seem to do so by a law of the mind which gives objectivity to our sensations."*

"Try your utmost to conceive an object as anything more than a synthesis of perceptions. You cannot. You may infer indeed that a *substratum* for all phenomena exists, although unknown, unknowable. But on what is your inference grounded? On the impossibility of conceiving the existence of qualities—extension, colour, &c.—apart from some substance *of which* they are qualities. This impossibility is a figment. The qualities have no need of an objective substratum, because they have a *subjective* substratum: they are the modifications of a

* The difference between Berkeley and Fichte is apparent here. The former said that the objects *did* exist independent of the Ego, but did *not* exist independent of the universal Mind. Fichte's Idealism was *Egoism*; Berkeley's was a theological Idealism.

sensitive subject, and the synthesis of these modifications is the only substratum of which they stand in need. This may be proved in another way. The qualities of objects, it is universally admitted, are but modifications of the subject: these qualities are *attributed to external objects*; they are dependent upon the subject for their existence; and yet, to account for their existence, it is asserted that some unknown external something must exist as a substance in which they must inhere. Now it is apparent that inasmuch as these qualities are subjective and dependent upon the subject for their existence, there can be no necessity for an object in which they must inhere."

Thus will Idealism defend itself against Realism.

We have made ourselves the advocates of Fichte's principles, but the reader will not mistake us for disciples of Fichte. In the exposition of his system we have, for obvious reasons, generally avoided his own manner, which is too abstract to be followed without difficulty; and have endeavoured to state his ideas in our own way. Those who are curious to see what he himself makes of his system are referred to his *Wissenschaftslehre* (of which a new edition, handsomely printed, has just appeared, and of which a French translation by M. Paul Grimblot exists, under the title of *Doctrine de la Science*, but we cannot speak as to its merits), or, as a more popular exposition, to his *Bestimmung des Menschen*, a French translation of which has been published by M. Barchou de Penhoen, under the title *Destination de l'Homme*, which, from the character and learning of the translator, is, we have no doubt, an excellent version.*

* An English translation has also been made by Mrs.

To exhibit Fichte's Idealism is, strictly speaking, all that our plan imposes on us ; but although his philosophical doctrines are all founded upon it, and although it was the doctrine which made an epoch in German philosophy, consequently the doctrine which entitles him to a place in this History, nevertheless we should be doing him injustice and misleading our readers if we did not give some glimpse of his moral system. The Idealism as Idealism seems little better than an ingenious paradox : only when we see it applied can we regard it as serious.

Percy Sinnett which can be recommended. Fichte's '*Wesen der Gelehrte*' has also recently appeared under the title of '*The Nature of the Scholar*.'

CHAPTER V.

APPLICATION OF FICHTE'S IDEALISM.

THE Ego is essentially an Activity; consequently free. But this free activity would lose itself in infinity, and would remain without consciousness—in fact, without existence—did it not encounter some *resistance*. In the effort to vanquish this resistance, it exerts its will, becomes conscious of something not itself, and *thereby* becomes conscious of itself. But resistance limits freedom, and as an Activity the Ego is essentially free—it is irresistibly impelled to enjoy perfect freedom.

This expansive force, which impels the Ego to realise itself by complete developement, and thereby assimilating the Non-Ego—this force, in as far as it is not realized, is the *aim* of man's existence—it is his duty.

Here the difference from the ordinary schools of morality begins to show itself. Duty is not a moral obligation which we are free to acknowledge or reject; it is a pulse beating in the very heart of man—a power inseparable from his constitution, and according to its fulfilment is the man complete.

The world does not exist because we imagine it, but because we *believe* it. Let all reality be swept away by scepticism—we are not affected. Man is impelled by his very nature to realize his existence by his acts. Our destination is not thought, but

action. Man is not born to brood over his thoughts, but to manifest them—to give them existence. There is a moral world *within*; our mission is to transport it *without*. By this we create the world. For what is the condition of existence—what determines Thought to *be*? Simply that it should realize itself as an object. The *Ego as simple subject* does not exist; it has only a potentiality of existence. To exist, it must realise itself and become *subject-object*.

Mark the consequence. Knowing that we carry within us the moral world, and that upon ourselves alone depends the attainment of so sublime an object as the manifestation of this world, it is to ourselves alone that we must direct our attention: This realisation of the world, what is it but the complete developement of ourselves? If we would *be*, therefore—if we would enjoy the realities of existence, we must develop ourselves in the attempt to incessantly realize the beautiful, the useful, and the good. Man is commanded to be moral by the imperious necessity of his own nature. To be virtuous is not to obey some external law, but to fulfil an internal law: this obedience is not slavery, but freedom; it is not sacrificing one particle of freedom to any other power, but wholly and truly realizing the power within us of being free.

Life is a combat. The free spirit of man, inasmuch as it is finite, is limited, imperfect; but it incessantly struggles to subjugate that which opposes it—it tends incessantly towards infinity. Defeated in his hopes, he is sometimes discouraged, but this lasts not long. There is a well-spring of energy for ever vital in the heart of man; an ideal

is for ever shining before him, and that he must attain.

Man knows himself to be free; knows also that his fellow-men are free; and therefore the duty of each is to treat the others as beings who have the same aim as himself. Individual liberty is therefore the principle of all government: from it Fichte deduces his political system.

And what says Fichte respecting God? He was, as we know, accused of atheism. Let us hear his real opinions. In his answer to that charge we have an abstruse, but at the same time positive, exposition of his views.* God created the world out of an inert mass of matter; and from the evidence of design in this created world we infer an intelligent designer. This is the common view; but Fichte could not accept it. In the first place, what we call the World is but the incarnation of our Duty (*unsere Welt ist das versinnlichte Materiale unserer Pflicht*). It is the objective existence of the Ego: we are, so to speak, the creators of it. This *looks* very like atheism, especially when Fichte's system is not clearly apprehended: it is, however, at the worst, only Acosmism.

Nor could Fichte accept the evidence of Design, because Design is a mere conclusion of the understanding, applicable only to finite, transient things, wholly inapplicable to the infinite: Design itself is but a subjective notion.†

"God," said Fichte, "must be *believed* in, not

* *Vide* 'Der Herausgeber des Philos. Journals gerichtliche Verantwortungs-schriften gegen die Anklage des Atheismus.' Von J. G. Fichte.

† See the before-named work, p. 43.

inferred. Faith is the ground of all conviction, scientific or moral. Why do you believe in the existence of the world? It is nothing more than the incarnation of that which you carry within you, yet you believe in it. In the same way God exists in your Consciousness, and you believe in him. He is the Moral Order (*moralische Ordnung*) of the world: as such we can know him, and only as such. For if we attempt to attribute to him Intelligence or Personality, we at once necessarily fall into anthropomorphism. God is infinite: therefore beyond the reach of our *science*, which can only embrace the finite, but not beyond our *faith*."

By our efforts to fulfil our Duty, and thus to realize the Good and Beautiful, we are tending towards God, we live in some measure the life of God. True religion is therefore the realization of universal reason. If we were all perfectly free we should be one; for there is but one Liberty. If we had all the same convictions, the law of each would be the law of all, since all would have but one Will. To this we aspire; to this Humanity is tending.

The germ of mysticism which lies in this doctrine was fully developed by some of Fichte's successors although he himself had particularly guarded against such an interpretation, and distinguishes himself from the mystics.

We may now pass to Fichte's Philosophy of History.

The historian only accomplishes half of the required task. He narrates the events of an epoch, in their order of occurrence, and in the form of their

* See his 'Sittenlehre' (1798), pp. 189, 194.

occurrence ; but he cannot be assured that he has not omitted some of these events, or that he has given them their due position and significance. The Philosopher must complete this incomplete method. He must form some Idea of the epoch—an Idea *à priori*, independent of experience. He must then exhibit this Idea always dominant throughout the epoch—and manifesting itself in all the multiplicity of facts, which are but its incarnation. What is the world but an incarnation of the Ego ? What is an epoch but an incarnation of an idea ?

Every epoch has therefore its pre-existent Idea. And this Idea will be determined by the Ideas of the epochs which have preceded it ; and will determine those which succeed it. Hence we conclude that the evolutions of Ideas—or the History of the World—is accomplished on a certain *plan*. The Philosopher must conceive this plan in its totality, that he may from it deduce the Ideas of the principal epochs in the history of Humanity, not only as past but as future.

The question first to be settled is this : what is the ground-plan of the world ? or, in other words, according to Fichte, what is the fundamental Idea which Humanity has to realize ?

The answer is : The Idea of Duty. This, in its concrete expression, is : To fix the relations of man to man in such order that the perfect liberty of each be compatible with the liberty of the whole.

History may thus be divided into two principal epochs. The one in which man has not established the social relations on the basis of reason. The other in which he has established them, and knows that he has done so.

That Humanity exists but for the successive and constant realization of the dictates of reason is easily proved. But sometimes Humanity has knowledge of what it performs, and why it performs it ; sometimes it obeys but a blind impulse. In this second case, that is to say, in the first epochs of the terrestrial existence of Humanity, Reason, although not manifesting itself distinctly, consciously, nevertheless exists. It manifests itself as an instinct, and appears under the form of a natural law ; it manifests itself in the intelligence only as a vague and obscure sentiment. Reason, on the contrary, no sooner manifests itself as Reason, than it is gifted with consciousness of itself and its acts. This constitutes the second epoch.

But Humanity does not pass at once from the first to the second epoch. At first Reason only manifests itself in a few men, the Great Men of their age, who thereby acquire authority. They are the instructors of their age ; their mission is to elevate the mass up to themselves. Thus Instinct diminishes, and Reason supervenes. Science appears. Morality becomes a science. The relations of man to man become more and more fixed in accordance with the dictates of reason.

The entire life of Humanity has five periods. I. The domination of Instinct over Reason : this is the primitive age. II. The general Instinct gives place to an external dominant Authority : this is the age of doctrines unable to convince and employing force to produce a blind belief, claiming unlimited obedience ; this is the period in which Evil arises. III. The Authority, dominant in the preceding epoch, but constantly attacked by Reason, becomes weak and wavering : this is the epoch of

scepticism and licentiousness. IV. Reason becomes conscious of itself; truth makes itself known; the science of Reason developes itself: this is the beginning of that perfection which Humanity is destined to attain. V. The science of Reason is applied; Humanity fashions itself after the ideal standard of Reason: this is the epoch of Art; the last term in the history of our species.

This brief outline of Fichte's system will be sufficient to assign him his place in the long line of European thinkers who have worked with such perseverance, the glittering mine of Metaphysics; and sufficient also, we trust not only to stimulate the curiosity of such readers whose studies lie in that direction, but also to furnish them with a general view capable of rendering all the details intelligible.

TENTH EPOCH.

OBJECTIVE IDEALISM.

CHAP. I. LIFE OF SCHELLING.

CHAP. II. SCHELLING'S DOCTRINES.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF SCHELLING.

SCHELLING is yet living. We saw him this spring (1845), hale and vigorous; we heard him lecture with an energy and perfection of delivery few young men exhibit. In his conversation, as in his bearing, there are few signs of age. In spite of his seventy years, one would say that he had still a long career to run. Does it not therefore seem somewhat premature to write his Life?

That others have written it is scarcely an excuse; and yet this being a Biographical History, some sort of biography is necessary. We must get out of the difficulty by confining ourselves to the leading facts of his public career.

Frederick William Joseph Schelling was born 27th January, 1775. He was subsequently ennobled by the King of Bavaria, and is now *Von Schelling*. At the University in Tübingen he first knew Hegel, and their friendship was enduring and productive. He studied, at Leipsig, Medicine and Philosophy; in the latter he became the pupil of Fichte. He afterwards filled Fichte's vacant chair at Jena, where he lectured with immense success. In 1807 he was made a member of the Munich Academy of Sciences. And in Bavaria, honoured and rewarded, he remained till 1842, when the King of Prussia seduced him to Berlin; and there,

in the chair once held by Hegel, he opened a series of lectures, which still are continued, in which he was to give the fruit of a life's meditation.

His appearance at Berlin was the signal for violent polemics. The Hegelians were all up in arms. Pamphlets, full of personalities and dialectics, were launched against Schelling, apparently without much effect. His foes have grown weary of screaming; he continues quietly to lecture. He has promised soon to publish these lectures, which will contain his system thoroughly developed and matured. Meanwhile we have only to concern ourselves with his early writings, and of those only such portions as contain the views which can be called fundamental. It would be a laborious task to follow him through all the modifications which his opinions underwent—a task, moreover, by no means falling in with the plan of this History.

CHAPTER II.

SCHELLING'S DOCTRINES.

SCHELLING is often styled the German Plato. In such parallels there is always some truth amidst much error. Schelling's works unquestionably exhibit great power of vivid imagination conjoined with subtle dialectics; if on this ground he is to be styled a Plato, then are there hundreds to share that title with him. His doctrines have little resemblance to those of his supposed prototype. Curiously enough he has a head marvellously like that of Socrates; not so ugly, not so like a mask, but still in the general character so resembling as to strike every one.

Schelling may be regarded as having been the systematiser of a tendency, always manifesting itself, but then in full vigour in Germany—the tendency towards Pantheism. This tendency is not merely the offspring of Mysticism. It may be recognised in the clear Göthe no less than in the mystical Novalis. It may as easily be logically deduced, as it may be confusedly felt. Spinoza “demonstrated” it, and Novalis felt it. In some way or other, Pantheism seems to result from every Philosophy of Religion, if the consequences be rigorously carried out; but Germany, above all European countries, has, both in feeling and speculation, the most constantly reproduced it. Her

poets, her artists, her musicians, and her thinkers, have been more or less Pantheists. Schelling's attempt therefore to give Pantheism a scientific basis, could not but meet with hearty approbation.

That Spinoza had already given this basis—that he had built on it a structure solid and compact—seems to have been overlooked. True that several Germans had studied his works, and borrowed many ideas from them; Schelling did so. But although Jacobi distinctly saw that Spinozism was the only *rational* solution of the great problems of Philosophy, he avoided Spinozism by calling in the aid of Faith. This also, in his own way, did Schelling.

We may here notice the similarity, in historical position, of the modern German speculations with those of the Alexandrian schools. In both the incapacity of Reason to solve the problems of Philosophy is openly proclaimed; in both some higher faculty is called in to solve them. Plotinus called this faculty *Ecstasy*. Schelling called it the *Intellectual Intuition*. The Ecstasy was not supposed to be a faculty possessed by all men, and at all times; it was only possessed by the few, and by them but sometimes. The Intellectual Intuition was not supposed to be a faculty common to all men; on the contrary, it was held as the endowment only of a few of the privileged: it was the faculty for philosophising. Schelling has superb disdain for those who talk about not comprehending the highest truths of Philosophy. "Really," he exclaims, "one sees not wherefore Philosophy should pay any attention whatever to Incapacity. It is better rather that we should isolate Philosophy from all the ordinary routes, and keep it so sepa-

rated from ordinary knowledge that none of these routes should lead to it. Philosophy commences where ordinary knowledge terminates." * The highest truths of science cannot be proved, they must be apprehended; for those who cannot apprehend them there is nothing but pity, argument is useless.

After this, were we to call Schelling the German Plotinus, we should, perhaps, be nearer the truth than in calling him the German Plato. But it was for the sake of no such idle parallel that we compared the fundamental positions of each. Our object was to "point a moral," and to show how the same forms of error re-appear in history, and how the labours of so many centuries have not advanced the human mind in this direction one single step.

But although Schelling's Philosophy is thus placed above criticism, and indeed above discussion, it is not placed above appreciation; and in giving a brief exposition of it we shall leave the appreciation to our readers.

The first point to be established is the nature of Schelling's improvement upon Fichte: the relation in which the two doctrines stand to each other.

Fichte's Idealism was a purely subjective Idealism. The Object had indeed reality, but was solely dependent upon the Subject. Endeavour as we might we could never separate the Object from the Subject, we could never conceive a possible mode of existence without being forced to identify with it a Subject. Indeed the very conception itself is but an act of the Subject. Admitting that we are

* 'Neue Zeitschrift für Speculative Physik,' vol. ii. p. 34.

forced by the laws of our mental constitution to postulate an unknown something, a Noumenon, as the substance in which all phenomena inhere, what, after all, is this postulate? It is an act of the Mind; it is wholly subjective; the necessity for the postulate is a mental necessity. The Non-Ego, therefore, is the product of the Ego.

There is subtle reasoning in the above; nay more, it contains a principle which is irrefutable: the principle of the identity of Object and Subject in knowledge.* This Schelling adopted. Nevertheless, in spite of such an admission, the nullity of the external world was too violent and repulsive a conclusion to be long maintained; and it was necessary to see if the principle of identity might not be preserved, without forcing us to such a conclusion.

The existence of the objective world is as firmly believed in as the existence of the subjective: they are, indeed, both given in the same act. We cannot be conscious of our own existence without at the same time inseparably connecting it with some other existence from which we distinguished ourselves. So in like manner we cannot be aware of the existence of anything out of ourselves without at the same time inseparably connecting with it a consciousness of ourselves. Hence we conclude that both exist; not indeed separately, not independently of each other, but *identified* in some

* This is the stronghold of Idealism, and we consider it impregnable, so long as men reason on the implied assumption, that whatever is true in human knowledge is equally true (*i. e.*, actually so co-ordinated) in fact; that as things appear to us so they are *per se*. And yet without this assumption Philosophy is impossible. *Ergo* — ?

higher power. Fichte said that the Non-Ego was created by the Ego. Schelling said that the two were equally real, and that both were identified in the Absolute.

Knowledge must be knowledge of something. Hence Knowledge implies the correlate of Being. Knowledge without an Object known, is but an empty form. But Knowledge and Being are correlates; they are not separable; they are identified. It is as impossible to conceive an Object known without a Subject knowing, as it is to conceive a Subject knowing without an Object known.

Nature is Spirit visible; Spirit is invisible Nature:* the absolute Ideal is at the same time the absolute Real.

Hence Philosophy has two primary problems to solve. In the *Transcendental Philosophy* the problem is to construct Nature from Intelligence—the Object from the Subject. In the *Philosophy of Nature* the problem is to construct Intelligence from Nature—the Subject from the Object.† And how are we to construct one from the other? This Fichte has taught us in the principle of the identity of Subject and Object, whereby the productivity and the product are in constant opposition, yet always one. The productivity (*Thätigkeit*) is the activity in act: it is the force which develops itself into all things. The product is the activity arrested and solidified into a fact; but it is always ready to pass again into activity. And thus the world

* Our readers will recognise here a favourite saying of Coleridge, many of whose remarks, now become famous, are almost verbatim from Schelling and the two Schlegels.

† *Systema des Transcendentalen Idealismus*, p. 7.

is but a balancing of contending powers within the sphere of the Absolute.

In what, then, does Schelling differ from Fichte, since both assert that the product (object) is but the arrested activity of the Ego? In this: the Ego in Fichte's system is a finite Ego—it is the human soul. The Ego in Schelling's system is the Absolute—the Infinite—the All which Spinoza called Substance; and this Absolute manifests itself in two forms: in the form of the Ego and in the form of the Non-Ego—as Nature and as Mind.

The Ego produces the Non-Ego, but not by its own force, not out of its own nature; it is the universal Nature which works within us and which produces from out of us; it is universal Nature which here in us is conscious of itself. Men are but the innumerable individual eyes with which the Infinite World spirit beholds himself.

What is the Ego? It is one and the same with the act which renders it an Object to itself. When I say “myself”—when I form a conception of my Ego, what is that but the Ego making itself an Object? Consciousness, therefore, may be defined the objectivity of the Ego. Very well; now apply this to the Absolute. He, too, must be conscious of himself, and for that he must realize himself objectively. We can now understand Schelling when he says “The blind and unconscious products of Nature are nothing but unsuccessful attempts of Nature to make itself an Object (*sich selbst zu reflectiren*); the so called dead Nature is but an unripe Intelligence. The acme of its efforts—that is, for Nature completely to objectize itself—is attained through the highest and ultimate degree of reflection in Man—or what we call *Reason*.

Here Nature returns into itself, and reveals its identity with that which in us is known as the Object and Subject." *

This function of Reason is elsewhere more distinctly described as the total *indifference-point* of the Subjective and Objective. The Absolute he represents by the symbol of the Magnet. Thus, as it is the same principle, which divides itself in the Magnet into the North and South poles, the centre of which is the Indifference-point, so in like manner does the Absolute divide itself into the Real and Ideal, and holds itself in this separation as absolute Indifference.† And as in the Magnet every point is itself a Magnet, having a North pole, a South pole, and a point of Indifference, so also in the Universe, the individual varieties are but varieties of the eternal One. Man is a microcosm.

Reason is the Indifference-point. Whoso rises to it, rises to the *reality* of things (*zum wahren Ansich*) which reality is precisely in the indifference of Object and Subject. The basis of Philosophy is therefore the basis of Reason; its Knowledge is a Knowledge of things as they *are*, i. e., as they are in Reason.‡

The spirit of Plotinus dictated these expressions. We have in them the whole key-stone of the Alexandrian school. The Intellectual Intuition by which we are to embrace the Absolute, is, as before remarked, but another form of the Alexandrian Ecstasy. Schelling was well aware that the Abso-

* 'System des Transcend. Idealismus,' p. 5.

† Hence Schelling's philosophy is often styled the Indifference Philosophy.

‡ 'Zeitschrift für speculat. Phys.,' vol. ii. heft 2.

lute, the Infinite as such, could be known under the conditions of finity, cannot be known in personal consciousness. How, then, can it be known? By some higher faculty which discerns the Identity of Object and Subject—which perceives the Absolute as Absolute, where all difference is lost in indifference.

There are three divisions in Schelling's system : the philosophy of Nature, the transcendental philosophy, and the philosophy of the Absolute.

His speculations with respect to Nature have met with considerable applause in Germany, and could meet with it nowhere else. Ingenious they certainly are, but vitiated in Method ; leading to no results, because incapable of verification. Those who are curious to see what he makes of Nature are referred to his *Zeitschrift für Speculative Physik*, and his *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*. The following examples will serve to indicate the kind of speculation :*

Subject and Object being identical, the absolute Identity is the absolute Totality named Universe. There can be no difference except a *quantitative* difference ; and this is only conceivable with respect to individual existences. For the absolute Identity is *quantitative indifference* both of Object and Subject, and is only under this form. If we could behold all that is, and behold it in its totality, we should see a perfect quantitative equality. It is only in the scission of the individual from the infinite that quantitative difference takes place. This

* The reader must not complain, if he do not understand what follows : intelligibility is not the characteristic of German speculation ; and we are here only translating Schelling's words without undertaking to enlighten their darkness.

difference of object and subject is the ground of all finity ; and, on the other hand, quantitative indifference of the two is infinity.

That which determines any difference is a Power (*Potenz*), and the Absolute, is the Identity of all Powers (*aller Potenzen*). All matter is originally liquid ; *weight* is the power through which the Attractive and Expansive force, as the immanent ground of the reality of Matter, operates. Weight is the first *Potenz*. The second *Potenz* is Light—an inward intuition of Nature, as Weight is the outward intuition. Identity with Light is Transparency. Heat does not pertain to the nature of Light, but is simply a *modus existendi* of Light. Newton's speculations upon Light are treated with disdain, as a system built upon illogical conclusions, a system self-contradictory, and leading to infinite absurdities. Nevertheless, this absurd system has led men to many discoveries : it is the basis of all that science builds, while the "superior" views of Schelling lead to nothing except disputation. So with his explanation of Electricity : let us suppose it exact, and we must still acknowledge it to be useless. It admits of no verification ; admits of no application. It is utterly sterile.

Schelling, in his *Jahrbücher der Medicin*, says that science is only valuable in as far as it is *speculative* ; and by speculation he means the contemplation of God as he exists. Reason, inasmuch as it affirms God, cannot affirm anything else, and annihilates itself at the same time as an *individual* existence, as anything *out of* God. Thought (*Das Denken*) is not my Thought ; and Being is not my Being ; for everything belongs to God or

the All. There is no such thing as a Reason which *we have*; but only a Reason that *has us*. If nothing exists out of God, then must the knowledge of God be only the infinite knowledge which God has of himself in the eternal Self-affirmation. God is not the highest, but the only One. He is not to be viewed as the summit or the end, but as the centre, as the All in All. Consequently, there is no such thing as a being lifted up to the knowledge of God; but the knowledge is *immediate* recognition.

If we divest Schelling's speculations of their dialectical forms, we shall arrive at the following results:—

Idealism is one-sided. Beside the Subject there must exist an Object: the two are identical in a third, which is the Absolute. This Absolute is neither Ideal nor Real—neither Mind nor Nature—but both. This Absolute is God. He is the All in All: the eternal source of all existence. He realizes himself under one form, as an objectivity; and under a second form as a subjectivity. He becomes conscious of himself in man; and this man, under the highest form of his existence, manifests Reason, and by this Reason God knows himself. Such are the conclusions to which Schelling's philosophy leads us. And now, we ask, in what does this philosophy differ from Spinozism?

The Absolute, which Schelling assumes as the Indifference-point of Subject and Object, is but the *πρῶτον ἀγαθόν* and primal Nothing, which forms the first Hypostasis of the Alexandrian Trinity.*

* See vol. ii., pp. 204-5. If the reader feels any difficulty in seizing Schelling's meaning with respect to the Absolute, he will find it illustrated in the chapter above referred to.

The Absolute, as the Identity of Subject and Object, being neither and yet both, is but the Substance of Spinoza, whose attributes are Extension and Thought.

With Spinoza also he agreed in giving only a phenomenal reality to the Object and Subject. With Spinoza he agreed in admitting but one existence—the Absolute.

But, although agreeing with Spinoza in his fundamental positions, he differed with him in Method, and in the applications of those positions. In both differences the superiority, as it seems to us, is incontestably due to Spinoza.

Spinoza deduced his system very logically from one fundamental assumption, viz., that whatever was true of ideas was true of objects. This assumption itself was not arbitrary. It was grounded upon the principle of certitude, which Descartes had brought forward as the only principle which was irrefragable. Whatever was found to be distinct and *à priori* in Consciousness, was irresistibly true. Philosophy was, therefore, deductive; and Spinoza deduced his system from the principles laid down by Descartes.

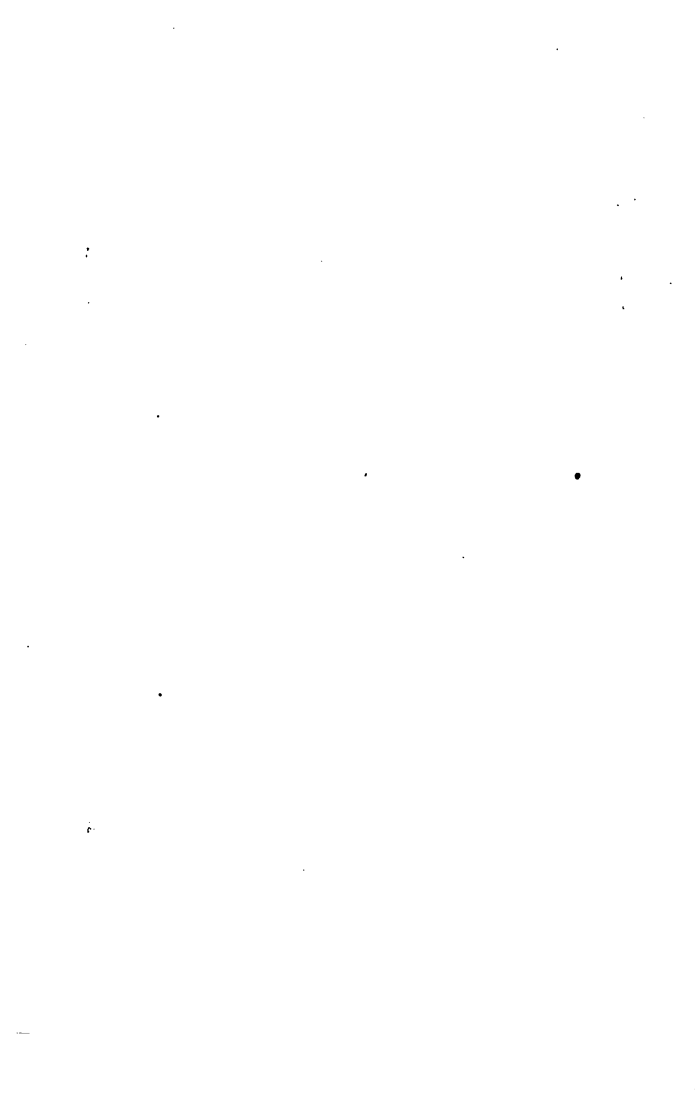
Schelling's Method was very different. Aware that human knowledge was necessarily finite, he could not accept Spinoza's Method, because that would have given him only a knowledge of the finite, the conditioned; and such knowledge, it was admitted, led to scepticism. He was forced to assume another faculty of knowing the truth, and this was the Intellectual Intuition. Reason which could know the Absolute was only possible, by transcending Consciousness and sinking into the Absolute. As Knowledge and Being were iden-

tical, to know the Infinite we must *be* the Infinite, *i. e.*, must lose our individuality in the universal.

Consciousness, then, which had for so long formed the basis of all Philosophy, was thrown over by Schelling, as incompetent to solve any of the problems. Consciousness was no ground of certitude. Reason was the organ of Philosophy, and Reason was *impersonal*. The Identity of Being and Knowing took the place of Consciousness, and became the basis of all speculation. We shall see to what it led in Hegel.

Our notice of Schelling has necessarily been brief; not because he merited no greater space, but because to have entered into details, with any satisfaction, would have carried us far beyond our limits. His works are not only numerous, but differ considerably in their views. All we have endeavoured to represent is the ideas which he produced as developements of Fichte, and which served Hegel as a basis.

A French translation of his best work, under the title of *Système de l'Idéalisme transcendantal*, by P. Grimblot, the translator of Fichte, is announced; also a version of Bruno on *Les Principes des Choses*. Nothing in English.



ELEVENTH EPOCH.

THE THIRD FORM OF IDEALISM, VIZ., ABSOLUTE
IDEALISM.

CHAP. I. LIFE OF HEGEL.

CHAP. II. HIS METHOD.

CHAP. III. HIS ABSOLUTE IDEALISM.

CHAP. IV. HIS LOGIC.

CHAP. V. APPLICATION OF THE METHOD TO
NATURE, HISTORY, RELIGION,
AND PHILOSOPHY.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF HEGEL.

GEORGE FREDERICK WILLIAM HEGEL was born at Stuttgard the 27th of August, 1770. He received that classical education which distinguished the Wirtembergian students beyond all others; and in his eighteenth year he went to Tübingen, to pursue his theological and philosophical studies. He was there a fellow-student with Schelling, for whom he contracted great esteem. The two young thinkers communicated to each other their thoughts, and discussed their favourite systems. In after life when opposition had sundered these ties, Hegel never spoke of this part of their connexion without emotion. In his twentieth year he had to give up all his plans for a professorship, and was content (hunger impelling) to accept the place of private tutor, first in Switzerland, and subsequently in Frankfort.

Early in 1801 his father died; and the small property he inherited enabled him to relinquish his tutorship, and to move to Jena, where he published his dissertation *De orbitis planetarum*. This work was directed against the Newtonian system of Astronomy. It was on application of Schelling's Philosophy of Nature; and in it Newton was treated with that scorn which Hegel never failed to heap upon Empirics, *i.e.*, those who trusted more

to experience than to logic. In the same year he published his 'Difference between Fichte and Schelling,' in which he sided with the doctrines of his friend, whom he joined in editing the 'Critical Journal of Philosophy.' It is in the second volume of this Journal that we meet with his celebrated essay *Glauben und Wissen* (Faith and Knowledge), in which Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte are criticised.

At Jena he enjoyed the society of Göthe and Schiller. The former, with his usual sagacity, detected the philosophical genius which as yet lay undeveloped in Hegel; of which more may be read in Göthe and Schiller's 'Correspondence.' Hegel, on the other hand, was to the last one of Göthe's staunchest admirers; and many a gleam of lustre is shed over the pages of the philosopher, by his frequent quotation of the poet.

At the University of Jena, Hegel then held the post of *Privat Docent*; but his lectures had only four listeners. These four, however, were all remarkable men: Gabler, Troxler, Bachmann, and Zellmann. On Schelling's quitting Jena, Hegel filled the chair; but filled it only for one year. Here he published his *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. He finished writing this work on the night of the ever-memorable battle of Jena. While the artillery was roaring under the walls, the Philosopher was deep in his work, unconscious of all that was going on. He continued writing, as Archimedes at the siege of Syracuse continued his scientific researches. The next morning, manuscript in hand, he steps into the streets, is proceeding to his publisher's, firmly convinced that the interests of mankind are bound up with that mass of writing which he hugs so tenderly. The course of his

reverie is somewhat violently interrupted ; bearded and gesticulating French soldiers arrest the philosopher, and significantly enough inform him that, for the present, the interests of men lie elsewhere than in manuscripts. In spite of French soldiers, however, the work in due time saw the light, and was welcomed by the philosophical world, as a new system—or rather as a new modification of Schelling's system. The editorship of the Bamberg newspaper was then offered him, and he quitted Jena. He did not long remain at Bamberg ; for in the autumn of 1808 we find him Rector of the Gymnasium College at Nürnberg. He shortly after married Fraulein von Tucher, with whom he passed a happy life, and by whom he had two sons. In 1816 he was called to the chair of Heidelberg, and published in 1817 his *Encyclopädie der Philos. Wissenschaften*, which contains an outline of his system. This work so exalted his reputation that in 1818 he was called to the chair of Berlin, then the most important in Germany. He there lectured for thirteen years, and formed a school, of which it is sufficient to name as among its members Gans, Rosenkranz, Michelet, Werder, Marheinecke, and Hothe.

Hegel was seized with the cholera in 1831, and after a short illness expired in the sixty-first year of his age, on the 24th of November, the anniversary of the death of Leibnitz.

CHAPTER II.

HEGEL'S METHOD.

SCHELLING'S doctrines were never systematically co-ordinated. The characteristic of his mind was certainly not scientific. He was subtle, ardent, and audacious ; but he abhorred precision ; and was in striking contradiction to his predecessors Kant and Fichte in the absence of logical forms. He preached ; he never attempted to demonstrate.

The effect of his preaching was felt more in the department of the philosophy of Nature than elsewhere. Crowds of disciples, some of them, as Oken and Steffens, illustrious disciples, attempted the application of his principles ; and after a vast quantity of ingenious, but sterile generalization, it was found that these principles led to no satisfactory conclusion.

Schelling's ideas were, however, very generally accepted in the philosophical world at the time Hegel appeared. These ideas were thought to be genuine intuitions of the truth ; the only drawback was their want of systematic co-ordination. They were inspirations of the truth ; and demonstrations were needed. The position Hegel was to occupy became therefore very clear. Either he must destroy those ideas and bring forward others ; or he must accept them, and, in accepting, systematise them. This latter was no easy task, and this was

the task he chose. In the course of his labours he deviated somewhat from Schelling, because the rigorous conclusions of his logic made such deviations necessary; but these are, after all, nothing but modifications of Schelling's ideas; very often nothing but different expressions for the same ideas.

What, then, constitutes Hegel's glory? What is the nature of his contribution to philosophy, which has placed him on so high a pedestal of renown? It is nothing less than the invention of a new Method.*

The invention of a Method we have always considered as, perhaps, the greatest effort of philosophical genius, and the most deserving of the historian's attention. A Method is a *path of transit*. Whoso discovers a path whereon mankind may travel in quest of truth, has done more towards the discovery of truth than thousands of men merely speculating. What had the observation and speculation of centuries done for astronomy before the right path was found? And if a Method could be found for Philosophy—if a path of transit from the phenomenal to the noumenal world could be found—should we not then be quickly in possession of the truth?

A Method is all-important. That invented by Descartes seemed promising; but it led to Malebranche and Spinoza. That invented by Locke had obvious excellencies; but it was a path of

* This is the claim put up by his disciple Michelet:—'Gesch. der Systeme der Philos.,' vol. ii., pp. 604-5; who declares Hegel's method to be all that can properly be called his own. Comp. Hegel's 'Vermischte Schriften,' vol. ii., p. 479.

transit to Berkeley and Hume. That of Kant led to Fichte and Scepticism.

Curious to consider! In the modern as in the ancient world, the inevitable results of a philosophical Method are Idealism and Scepticism. One class of minds is led to Idealism or Mysticism; another class is led to Scepticism. But as both these conclusions are repugnant to the ordinary conclusions of mankind, they are rejected, and the Method which led to them is also rejected. A new one is found; hopes beat high; truth is about to be discovered; the search is active, and the result—always the same—repugnant Idealism or Scepticism! Thus struggling and being baffled, hoping and being dispirited, has Humanity for ever renewed the conflict, without once gaining a victory. It is Sisyphus rolling up the heavy stone, that no sooner reaches a certain point than down it rolls to the bottom, and all the labour is to begin again.

In this history we have already traced the efforts of many noble minds; we have seen the stone laboriously rolled upwards, and seen it swiftly roll down again. We have seen Methods discovered; followed adventurous spirits as they rushed forward to conquest; and seen the discouragement, the despair which possessed them, as they found their paths leading only to a yawning gulf of scepticism, or a baseless cloud-land of Idealism. We have now to witness this spectacle once more. We have to see whither Hegel's Method can conduct men.

And what is this Method which Hegel discovered? Accepting as indisputable the identity of object and subject, he was forced also to accept

the position that whatever was true of the thought was true of the thing. In other words, Mind and Matter being identical, Ideas and Objects were correlates, and equally true. This is the position upon which Descartes stood; the position upon which Spinoza stood. Schelling and Hegel arrived at this position by a different route, but they also took their stand upon it.

Now, it is evident that such a position is exposed to attacks on all sides; to none more so than to the contradictions which rise up from within it. If whatever is true of Ideas is true also of Objects, a thousand absurdities bristle up against us. Thus, as Kant said, there is considerable difference between *thinking* we possess a hundred dollars, and *possessing* them. Hegel's answer is delicious: he declares that Philosophy does not concern itself with such things as a hundred dollars! (*daran ist philosophisch nichts zu erkennen*). Philosophy directs its thoughts only towards that which is necessary and eternal.

Very well: let such miserable illustrations as that of dollars be banished from discourse; let us concern ourselves only with what is necessary and eternal; let us confine ourselves to abstractions. Are there no contradictions here between Thoughts and Realities? For example, we have the Thought of Non-existence: does, therefore, this Non-existence which is our Thought also possess an objective being? *Is* there a Non-existence?

We have chosen this idle question because Hegel himself has forced us to it. He boldly says that the Non-existence—the Nothing—*exists*, because it is a Thought (*Das Nichts ist; denn es ist ein Gedanke*). It is not, however, merely a Thought,

but it is the same Thought as that of pure Being (*Seyn*), viz., an entirely *unconditioned* Thought.

In this, coupled with his famous axiom, that "Being and Non-Being are the same" (*Seyn und Nichts ist dasselbe*), we have two of the curious results to which his Method led him. Let us again ask, What was that Method? It was the Method of Descartes, founded upon Descartes' principle of the truth of *ideas* being equivalent to the truth of *things*; but inasmuch as this met with strong opposition from various sides, Hegel resolved to give it a deeper, firmer basis, a basis that went underneath these contradictions. The basis was his principle of the *identity of contraries*.

Let us explain. Two contraries are commonly supposed to exclude each other reciprocally: Existence excludes Non-Existence. This notion Hegel pronounces to be false. Everything is contradictory in itself: contradiction forms its essence: its identity consists in being the union of two contraries. Thus Being (*Seyn*) considered absolutely—considered as unconditioned—that is to say, as Being in the abstract, apart from any individual thing, is the same as Nothing. Existence is therefore identical with its negation. But to conclude that there is not Existence would be false; for the abstract Nothing (*Nichts*) is at the same time the abstract Being. We must, therefore, unite these two contraries, and in so doing we arrive at a middle term—the realization* of the two in one, and this is *conditioned* Existence—it is the world.

Here is another example: in pure light, that is

* The original word is *werden*—the *becoming*. It is much used in German speculation to express the transition from Non-being to Being.

light without colour or shadow, we should be totally unable to see anything. Absolute clearness is, therefore, identical with absolute obscurity—with its negation, in fact; but neither clearness nor obscurity are complete alone: by uniting them we have clearness mingled with obscurity; that is to say, we have Light properly so called.

Hegel thus seized the bull by the horns. Instead of allowing himself to be worsted by the arguments derived from the contradictions to which the identity of Existence and Knowledge was exposed, he at once met the difficulty by declaring that the identity of contraries was the very condition of all existence; without a contrary nothing could come into being. This was a bit of logical audacity which astounded his countrymen, and they have proclaimed this feat worthy of immortal glory. A new light seemed to be thrown upon the world; a new aspect was given to all existences. Being was at the same time Non-Being; Subject was at the same time Object; and Object was Subject; Force was at the same time Impotence; Light was also Darkness, and Darkness was also Light.

Nothing in this world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle.

The merit of this discovery, whatever may be its value, is considerably diminished, when we remember how distinctly it was enunciated in ancient Greece. Heraclitus had told us how "All is, and is not; for though it comes into being, yet it forthwith ceases to be." Empedocles had told us how there was "Nothing but a mingling and then a separation of the mingled." Indeed, the constant

flux and reflux of life, the many changes, and the compound nature of all things, must early have led men to such a view. Hegel himself admits that all the positions maintained by Heraclitus, have been by him developed in his Logic. What, then, was wanting to Heraclitus—what is the great merit of Hegel? A perception of the logical law of the identity of contraries. To this Hegel has sole claim.

Here, then, is the foundation-stone of Hegel's system. He adopts the principle of the identity of Subject and Object.

This principle being pronounced false, because it leads to manifest contradictions.

Hegel replies that the principle is true; and that it *must* lead to contradictions, because the identity of contraries is the condition of all existence.

Such is the Method which admiring disciples extol as the greatest effort of Philosophy, as the crown of all previous speculations; and even in France it has been in some quarters accepted as a revelation. The latest Historian of Philosophy—M. Ch. Renouvier—has declared this Method irreproachable (*Manuel de Philos. Moderne*, p. 363).

The law being given, we may now give the process. Let us take any one Idea (and with Hegel an Idea is a reality, an object, not simply a modification of the subject); this Idea by its inherent activity tends to develop that which is within it. This developement operates a division of the Idea into two parts—a positive and a negative. Instead of one Idea we have therefore two, which reciprocally exclude each other. The Idea, therefore, by the very act of developement only conduces

to its own negation. But the *process* does not stop there. The negation itself must be negated. By this negation of its negation, the Idea returns to its primitive force. But it is no longer the same. It has developed all that it contained. It has absorbed its contrary. Thus the negation of the negation, by *suppressing* the negation at the same time *preserves* it.*

We may, by way of anticipation, observe that Hegel's notion of God becoming conscious of himself in Philosophy, and thereby attaining his highest developement, is founded on the above process. God as pure Being can only pass into reality through a negation; in Philosophy he *negatives this negation*, and thus becomes a *positive* affirmation.

As a display of perverse ingenuity, stolidly convinced of its entire seriousness and importance—as an example of unhesitating confidence in the validity of verbal distinctions—the philosophy of Hegel has perhaps never been equalled. As Dr. Ott epigrammatically remarks, “Ici l'absurdité se pose comme méthode fondamentale.” Twenty volumes 8vo.—twenty serious volumes attest the seriousness with which this method was pursued.

* This play upon words is assisted by the German *aufheben*, which means to suppress as well as to preserve. See Ott, ‘Hegel et la Philos. Allemande,’ p. 80.

CHAPTER III.

ABSOLUTE IDEALISM.

WE have seen Hegel's Method. Whether that be a path of transit to the domain of truth, or only to the cloudland of mysticism and the bogs of absurdity, our readers will very soon decide. Meanwhile we must further detail Hegel's opinions; we must see whither his Method did lead him.

As every thing contains within itself a contradiction, and as the identity of the two constitutes its essence, so we may say that Schelling's conception of the identity of subject and object was not altogether exact. He assumed the reality of both of these *poles* of the magnet; and the identity he called the point of indifference between them. These two extremities were always separate, though identified. Hegel declared that the essence of all relation—that which is true and positive in every relation—is not the *two terms related*, but the *relation itself*.

This is the basis of Absolute Idealism.

It may be thus illustrated. I see a tree. The common psychologists tell me that there are three things implied in this one fact of vision, viz., a tree, an image of that tree, and a mind which apprehends that image. Fichte tells me that it is I alone who exist. The tree and the image of the tree are one thing, and that is a modification of my mind. This is *Subjective Idealism*. Schelling

tells me that both the tree and my Ego are existences equally real or ideal, but they are nothing less than manifestations of the Absolute. This is *Objective Idealism*. But Hegel tells me that all these explanations are false. The only thing really existing (in this one fact of vision) is the Idea—the *relation*. The Ego and the Tree are but two terms of the relation, and owe their reality to it. This is *Absolute Idealism*. Of the three forms of Idealism this is surely the most preposterous; and that any sane man—not to speak of a man so eminent as Hegel—should for an instant believe in the correctness of the logic which “brought him to this pass”—that he should not at once reject the premisses from which such conclusions followed—must ever remain a wonder to all sober thinkers, must ever remain a striking illustration of the unbounded confidence in bad logic which distinguishes Metaphysicians.

Gens ratione ferox, et mentem pasta chimæris.

Truly, a race mad with logic, and feeding the mind with chimæras!

What does this Absolute Idealism bring us to? It brings us to a world of mere “relations.” The Spinozistic notion of “Substance” was too gross. To speak of substance, was to speak only of *one* term of a relation. The Universe is but the Universe of Ideas, which are at once both objective and subjective, and whose essence consists in the relation they bear to each other, in the identity of their contradiction.

Remark also that this Absolute Idealism is nothing but Hume’s Scepticism, in a dogmatical form. Hume denied the existence of Mind and

Matter, and said there was nothing but Ideas. Hegel denies the existence of both object and subject, and says there is nothing but the "relations" of the two. He blames Kant for having spoken of Things as if they were only appearances to us (*Erscheinungen für uns*) while their real nature (*Ansich*) was inaccessible. The real relation, he says, is this: that the Things we know are not only appearances to us, but are in themselves mere appearances (*sondern ansich blosse Erscheinungen*) The real objectivity is this: that our Thoughts are not only Thoughts, but at the same time are the reality of Things.*

This is *the* Philosophy; not *a* Philosophy, remember, not a system which may take its place amongst other systems. No, it is the Philosophy *par excellence*. We have Hegel's word for it;† we have the confirmation of that word by many ardent disciples. True it is that some of the young Hegelians when reproached with the constant changes they introduce, reply that it belongs to the nature of Philosophy to change (!) But these are inconsiderate rash young men. Mature and sober thinkers (of Hegel's school) declare that although some improvements are possible in detail, yet on the whole Hegel has given *the* Philosophy to the world.

And this philosophy is not a system of doctrines whereby man is to guide himself. It is something

* "Dass die Gedanken nicht bloss unsere Gedanken, sondern zugleich das Ansich der Dinge und des Gegenständlichen überhaupt sind."—'Encyclopædie,' p. 89. See also p. 97 for that quoted above. The whole of this Introduction to the 'Encyclopædie' is worth consulting.

† Gesch. der Philos., vol. iii. p. 690.

far greater. It is the contemplation of the self-developement of the Absolute. Hegel congratulates mankind upon the fact of a new epoch having dawned. "It appears," says he, "that the World-Spirit (*Weltgeist*) has at last succeeded in freeing himself from all incumbrances and is able to *conceive himself as Absolute Intelligence* (*sich als absoluten Geist zu erfassen*) For he is this only in as far as he knows himself to be the Absolute Intelligence: *and this he knows only in Science; and this knowledge alone constitutes his true existence.*"*

Such pretensions would be laughable were they not so painful to contemplate: To think not only of one man, and that one remarkable for the subtlety of his intellect, a subtlety which was its bane, together with many other men—some hundred or so, all rising above the ordinary level of ability—one and all cultivating as the occupation of their lives a science with such pretensions as those above noted, and with such a method as that of the identity of contraries! We know of few delusions more sad to look upon. The delusions daily to be seen are those of ignorance and only depend upon ignorance. But the delusions of Metaphysics are the delusions of an ambitious intelligence which "o'erleaps itself." Men such as Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, for example, belong incontestably to a high order of intelligences; yet we have seen to what their reasonings brought them; we have seen what absurdities they could take up with, believing they had found the truth. Hegel especially impresses you with a sense of his wonderful power.

* 'Gesch. der Philos.,' vol. iii., p. 689.

We who trace these lines, in which respect for common sense, no less therefore sound logic forces a condemnation of the system of Hegel—we are amongst his warm admirers. His works we have always found very suggestive;* his ideas, if repugnant to what we regard as the truth, are yet so coherent, so systematically developed, and the whole matter so obviously coming from matured meditation, that we have always risen from the perusal with a sense of the author's greatness, and of having had new lights thrown on the subject. We allude especially to his 'Lectures on *Æsthetics*;' his 'History of Philosophy;' his 'Philosophy of History,' and his 'Philosophy of Religion.' These are works which it must always be profitable to study.

But the system itself we may leave to all readers to decide, whether it be worthy of any attention, except as an illustration of the devious errors of speculation. A system which begins with assuming that Being and Non-Being are the same, because Being in the abstract is the Unconditioned, and so also is Non-Being; therefore both, as unconditioned, are the same; a system which proceeds upon the identity of contraries as the method of Philosophy; a system in which Thought is the same as the Thing, and the Thing is the same as the Thought; a system in which the only real positive existence is that of simple Relation, the two terms of which are Mind and Matter; this system were it wholly true, leaves all the questions, for which science is useful as a light, just as much in the dark as ever; and is, therefore, unworthy the attention of earnest men working for the benefit of mankind.

* Suggestive we mean as provoking the student to refute him, and in the refutation striking out new views of his own.

CHAPTER IV.

HEGEL'S LOGIC.

PHILOSOPHY being the contemplation of the self-developement of the Absolute, or, as Hegel sometimes calls it, the representation of the Idea (*Darstellung der Idee*), it first must be settled in what directions this developement takes place.

The process is this. Everything must be first considered *per se* (*ansich*) ; next in its negation as some *other* thing (*anderseyn*). These are the two terms—the contraries ; but they must be identified in some third or they cannot exist ; this third is the Relation of the two (the *anundfürsichseyn*). This is the affirmation which is founded on the negation of a negation : it is therefore positive, real.

The Absolute, which is both Thought and Being, must be considered in this triple order, and Philosophy falls into three parts :—

I. LOGIC, the science of the *Idee* * *an und für sich*.

II. NATURE-PHILOSOPHY as the science of the *Idee* in its *Anderseyn*.

III. PHILOSOPHY OF INTELLIGENCE, as the *Idee* which has returned from its *Anderseyn* to itself.

* The *Idee* is but another term for the absolute. We shall use it, rather than *Idea*, its English translation, because the English word cannot so be employed without creating unnecessary confusion.

Logic, in this system, has a very different meaning from that usually given to the word. It is indeed, equally with the common logic, an examination of the forms of Thought; but it is more:—it is an examination of Things, no less than of Thoughts. As Object and Subject are declared identical, and whatever is true of the Thought is equally true of the Thing, since the Thought is the Thing, Logic, of course, takes the place of the ancient Logic and at the same time of Metaphysics. It is the generation of all abstract ideas. Consequently it contains the whole system of Science, and the other parts are but the application of this Logic.

Hegel's "Logic" is in three stout volumes of dry hard scholasticism. It is a representation of the *Idee* in its process of pure Thought free from all contact with objects. It is wholly abstract. It begins with pure Being. This pure Being in virtue of its purity is *unconditioned*; but that which has no conditions has no existence: it is a pure abstraction. Now a pure abstraction is also the *Nothing* (*das Nichts*): it also has no conditions; its unconditionality makes its nothingness.

The first proposition in Logic is, therefore, "Being and Non-Being are the same."

Hegel admits the proposition to be somewhat paradoxical, and is fully aware of its openness to ridicule; but he is not a man to be scared by a paradox, to be shaken by a sarcasm. He is aware that stupid common sense will ask, "whether it is the same if my house, my property, the air I breathe, this town, sun, the law, mind, or God, exist or not." Certainly, a very pertinent question: how does he answer it? "In such examples," he says, "particular ends—utility, for instance—are under-

stood, and then it is asked if it is indifferent to me whether these useful things exist or not? But, in truth, Philosophy is precisely the doctrine which is to free man from innumerable finite aims and ends, and to make him so indifferent to them that it is really all the same whether such things exist or not." Here we trace the Alexandrian influence—except that Plotinus would never have had the audacity to say that Philosophy was to make us indifferent whether God existed or not; and it must have been a slip of the pen which made Hegel include God in the examples: a slip of the pen, or else the "rigour of his pitiless logic," of which his disciples talk. "Pitiless," indeed: a man more intrepid in absurdity it would be impossible to find.

Remark, also, the evasive nature of his reply. Common sense suggests to him a plain direct question, not without interest. This question, plain as it is, goes to the bottom of his system. He evades it by answering, that Philosophy has nothing to do with the interests of men. Very true; his system *has* nothing to do with them. But the question put was not, "Has Philosophy to concern itself with the interests of mankind?" The question put was, "If, as you say, Being and Non-Being are the same, is it the same thing to have a house and not to have it?" Hegel might have given a better answer even upon his own principles.

To return, however. The first proposition has given us the two contraries; there must be an identity—a relation—to give them positive reality. As pure Being, and as pure Non-Being, they have no reality; they are mere potentialities. Unite them, and you have the *Becoming* (*Werden*), and

that is reality. Analyse this idea of Becoming, and you will find that it contains precisely these two elements — a Non-Being from which it is evolving, and a Being which is evolved.

Now these two elements, which reciprocally contradict each other, which incessantly tend to absorb each other, are only maintained in their reality by means of the relation in which they are to each other—that is, the point of the magnet which keeps the poles asunder; and by keeping them asunder prevents their annihilating each other.

The Becoming is the first concrete Thought we can have, the first conception, against which Being and Non-Being are pure abstractions.

A question naturally suggests itself as to how Being and Non-Being pass from Abstractions into Realities. The only answer Hegel gives us is that they *become* Realities; but this is answering us with the very question itself. We want to know *how* they become. In themselves, as pure Abstractions, they have no reality; and although two negatives make an affirmative in language, it is not so evident how they accomplish this in fact. The question is of course insoluble; and the Hegelians whom we have questioned on the point have unanimously declared it to be one of those truths (very numerous in their system) which can be comprehended, but not proved.

Let us grant the Becoming. It is the identity of Being and Non-Being; and as such it is Being as *determined*, conditioned. All determination (*Bestimmung*) is Negation.* Therefore, in order

* This, as many other ideas, is borrowed from Spinoza, in whose system it has real significance. In Hegel's it is a mere play upon words.

that Being should become, it must suffer first a negation: the *ansichseyn* must also be *anderseyn*, and the relation of the two is total reality, the *an-und-für-sich-seyn*.

Quality is the first negation: it is the reality of a thing. That which constitutes *Quality* is the negation which is the condition of its Being. Blue, for example, is blue only because it is the negation of red, green, purple, &c.; a meadow is a meadow only because it is not a vineyard, a park, a ploughed field, &c.

Being, having suffered a Negation, is determined as *Quality*—it is *Something*, and no longer an *Abstraction*. But this *Something* is limited by its very condition; and this limit, this negation, is external to it: hence *Something* implies *Some-other-thing*. There is a *This* and a *That*. Now the *Something* and the *Some-other-thing*—the *This* and the *That* are the *same* thing. *This* is a tree; *That* is a house. If I go to the house, it will then be the *This*, and the tree will be *That*. Let the tree be the *Something*, and the house the *Some-other-thing*, and the same change of terms may take place. This proves that the two are identical. The *Something* carries its opposite (*other-thing*) within itself; it is constantly becoming the *other-thing*. Clearly showing that the only positive reality is the *Relation* which always subsists throughout the changes of the terms.

This, it must be owned, is the genuine insanity of Logic. With difficulty will many believe that any sane man should have put it forth. As a specimen of verbal sophistry it would be feeble; as a specimen of Logic it is pitiable. It is not, however, unexampled in Hegel's works. In his

'Phaenomenologie des Geistes,' he tells us that perception gives us the ideas of Now, Here, This, &c. And what is the Now? At noon I say "*Now* it is day." Twelve hours afterwards I say "*Now* it is night." My first affirmation is therefore false as to the second, my second false as to the first: which proves that the *Now* is a general idea; and as such a real existence independent of all particular *Nows*.

Our readers are by this time probably quite weary of this frivolous Logic; we shall spare them any further details. If they wish further to learn about Quantities, Identities, Diversities, &c., they must consult the original; or, in default thereof, the long analysis given by Dr. Ott.

Those who are utter strangers to German speculation will wonder, perhaps, how it is possible for such verbal quibbles to be accepted as philosophy.

But, in the first place, philosophy itself, in all its highest speculations, is but a more or less ingenious playing upon words. From Thales to Hegel, verbal distinctions have always formed the ground of philosophy, and must ever do so as long as we are unable to penetrate the essence of things. In the second place, Hegel's Logic is a work requiring prodigious effort of thought to understand; so difficult and ambiguous is the language, and so obscure the meaning. Now, when a man has once made this effort, and succeeded, he is very apt to over-value the result of all that labour, and to believe what he has found to be a genuine truth. Thirdly, Hegel is very consistent; consistent to audacity, to absurdity. If the student once yields assent to the premises, he is sure to be dragged irresistibly to the conclusions. Fourthly, the reader must not

suppose that the absurdities of Hegel's system are so apparent in his works as in our exposition. We have exerted ourselves to the utmost to preserve the real significance of his speculations; but we have also endeavoured to bring them into the clear light of day. Anything except a *verbal* translation would reveal some aspects of the absurdity, by the very fact of bringing it out of the obscurity with which the German terminology veils it. The mountain looming through a fog turns out to be a miserable hut as soon as the fog is scattered; and so the boasted system of Absolute Idealism turns out to be only a play upon words, as soon as it is dragged from out the misty terminology in which it is enshrouded.

CHAPTER V.

APPLICATION OF THE METHOD TO NATURE, AND
HISTORY, RELIGION, AND PHILOSOPHY.

HAVING exhibited the various evolutions of the *Idee* as pure Thought, Hegel undertakes to exhibit its objective evolutions in the domain of Nature.

In the former attempt he had only to deal with abstractions, and it was no such difficult matter to exhibit the "generation of ideas"—the dependence of one formula upon another. Verbal distinctions were sufficient there. But in attacking the problems presented us by Nature, and in endeavouring to give scientific solutions, verbal distinctions, audacious logic, and obscure terminology avail nothing. Nature is not to be coerced. But this does not make Hegel hesitate. Aware of the difficulties—seeing instinctively that the varieties of Nature could not be reduced to the same simplicity as the varieties of the *Idee*—as Thought had been reduced in his Logic—he at once asserted that the determinations of the *Idee* in its *exteriority* could not follow the same march as the determinations of the *Idee* as Thought. Instead of generating each other reciprocally, as in the Logic, these determinations have no other connexion than that of co-existence; sometimes indeed they appear isolated.

When we look abroad upon Nature, we observe an endless variety of transformations. At first these

seem without order; on looking deeper, we find that there is a regular series of developement from the lowest to the highest. These transformations are the struggles of the *Idee* to manifest itself *objectively*. Nature is a dumb Intelligence striving to articulate. At first she mumbles; with succeeding efforts she articulates; at last she speaks.

Every modification which the *Idee* undergoes in the sphere of pure Thought it endeavours to express in the sphere of Nature. And thus an object is elevated in the scale of creation in so far as it resumes within itself a greater number of qualities: inorganic matter is succeeded by organic, and amongst organized beings there is a graduated scale from the plant up to man. In Man the *Idee* assumes its highest grade. In Reason it becomes conscious of itself, and thereby attains real and positive existence—the highest point of developement. Nature is divine in principle (*ansich*), but it is a mistake to suppose it divine *as it exists*. This is the mistake of Pantheism. Nature is made one with God, and God one with Nature. In truth, Nature is but the exteriority (*Ausserlichkeit*) of God: it is the passage of the *Idee* through imperfection (*Abfall der Idee*). Observe, moreover, that Nature is not only external in relation to the *Idee*, and to the subjective existence of the *Idee*, namely, Intelligence; but exteriority constitutes the condition in virtue of which Nature is Nature (*sondern die Ausserlichkeit macht die Bestimmung aus, in welcher sie als Natur ist*).

The Philosophy of Nature is divided into three sections—Mechanics, Physics, and Physiology. Into the details, we are happy to say, our plan forbids us to enter; or we should have many striking

illustrations of the deplorable frivolity of that method which pretends to construct the scheme of the world *à priori*. Experimental philosophers—Newton especially—are treated with consistent contempt. Hegel is not a timid spectator; he recoils from no consequence; he bows down to no name; he is impressed by no fact, however great. That Newton's speculations should be no better than drivel, and his "discoveries" no better than illusions, were natural consequences of Hegel's fundamental theories. That all Europe had been steadily persevering in applying Newton's principles, and extending his discoveries—that Positive Science was making gigantic strides, hourly improving man's mastery over nature, hourly improving the condition of mankind—this fact, however great it may appear to us when coupled with the other fact that upon the ontological Method no discoveries had yet been made, and none seemed likely to be made—appeared to Hegel as unworthy of a philosopher's notice. The interests of mankind were vulgar considerations, for which there would always be abundant vulgar minds. The philosopher had other objects.

The Third and last part of Hegel's system is the Philosophy of Intelligence. Therein the *Idee* returns from Nature to itself, and returns through a consciousness of itself.

Subjectively the *Idee* first manifests itself as a Soul; it then returns upon itself, and becomes Consciousness; and finally renders itself an Object to itself, and then it is Reason.

Objectively the *Idee* manifests itself as Will, and realizes itself in History and in Law.

The Subjective and Objective manifestations being thus marked out, we have now to see in what manner the identity of the two will manifest itself. The identity of the Objective and Subjective is the *Idee*, as Intelligence, having consciousness of itself in individuals, and realizing itself as Art, as Religion, and as Philosophy.

We must be very brief in our exposition of his remaining tenets. Psychology and Law we pass over altogether: the former would require too much space to render it intelligible, and would then only seem to all our readers absurd; the latter has no interest for us here.

We will pause a moment at History. The Lectures on the Philosophy of History,* edited by the late accomplished Professor Gaus, is one of the pleasantest books on the subject we ever read: let the following ideas be sufficient to give an indication of its method.

History is the developement of the *Idee* objectively—the process by which it attains to a consciousness of itself by explaining itself.† The condition of Intelligence is to know itself; but it can know itself only after having passed through the three phases of the method, viz., affirmation, negation, and negation of negation, as the return to consciousness endowed with reality. It is owing to these phases that the human race is perfectible.

States, Nations, and Individuals represent the de-

* 'Werke,' vol. ix.

† History is a sort of Theodicea; the merit of originality, however, which Hegel claims ('Einleitung,' p. 20), is due to Vico, from whom he has largely borrowed; Vico expressly calls his New Science a *civil theology of Divine Providence*. See 'La Science Nouvelle,' liv. i. ch. iv.

terminate moments of this developement. Each of these moments manifests itself in the constitution, in the manners, in the creeds, in the whole social state of any one nation. For this nation it is what we call the spirit of the age: it is the only possible truth, and by its light all things are seen. But with reference to the absolute *Idee*, all these particular manifestations are nothing but *moments* of transition—instruments by which the transition to another higher moment is prepared. Great men are the incarnations of the spirit of the age.

It is not every nation that constitutes itself into a state: to do that, it must pass from a family to a horde, from a horde to a tribe, and from a tribe to a state. This is the formal realization of the *Idee*.

But the *Idee* must have a theatre on which to develope itself. The Earth is that theatre; and as it is the product of the *Idee* (according to the *Naturphilosophie*), we have the curious phenomenon of an actor playing upon a stage—that stage being himself! But the Earth, as the geographical basis of History, has three great divisions:—I. The mountainous regions. II. The plains and valleys. III. The coasts and mouths of rivers. The first represents the primitive condition of mankind; the second the more advanced condition, when society begins to be formed; the third, when, by means of river-communication, the activity of the human race is allowed free developement in all directions, particularly of commerce. This is another of the ideas of Vico,* and is in defiance of all history.

The great *moments* of History are four. I. In the *East* we have the predominance of substan-

* 'La Science Nouvelle,' livre i. ch. ii. § 97.

tiality: the *Idee* does not know its freedom. The rights of men are unknown because the East knows only that *one* is free. This is the *childhood* of the World. II. In Greece we have the predominance of individuality. The *Idee* knows that it is free, but only under certain forms, that is to say, only *some* are free. Mind is still mixed with Matter and finds its expression therein; this expression is Beauty. This is the *youthhood* of the World. III. In Rome we have opposition between the Objective and Subjective. The political universality and individual freedom both developed yet not united. This is the *manhood* of the world. IV. In the Teutonic Nations we have the unity of the contradiction—the *Idee* knowing itself; and instead of supposing like Greece and Rome that *some* only are free, it knows that *all* men are free. This is the *old age* of the world; but although the old age of body is weakness, the old age of Mind is ripeness. The first form of government which we see in History is Despotism; the second is Democracy and Aristocracy; the third is Monarchy.*

On reading over this meagre analysis we scarcely recognise the ingenious speculations of the original. Such is the art with which Hegel clothes his ideas in the garb of philosophy, that though aware that he is writing fiction, not history, and giving us perversions of notorious facts as the laws of historical developement—telling us that the Spirit of the World manifests himself under such and such phases, when it is apparent to all that, granting the theory of this World-spirit's developement, the phases were *not* such as Hegel declares them to

* 'Philos. der Gesch.,' p. 128.

have been—although aware of all this, yet is the book so ingenious and amusing, that it seems almost unfair to reduce it to such a *caput mortuum* as our analysis. Nevertheless the principles of his philosophy of History are those we have given above. The application of those principles to the explication of the various events of History, is still more ingenious; but we cannot touch upon this subject.

Hegel's 'Philosophy of Religion' has in the last few years been the subject of bitter disputes. The schisms of the young Hegelians—the doctrines of Strauss, Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and others—being all deduced, or pretended to be deduced from Hegel's system, much angry discussion has taken place, as to the real significance of that system. When Doctors thus disagree we shall not presume to decide. We will leave the matter to theologians; and for the present only notice Hegel's fundamental ideas.

It is often a matter of wonder to see how Hegel's Method is applied to all subjects, and how his theory of life can be brought to explain every product of life. This is doubtless a great logical merit; and it inspires disciples with boundless confidence. Few, however, we suspect have approached the subject of Religion without some misgivings as to the applicability of the Method to explain it. Probably the triumph is great, when the applicability is shown to be as perfect here as elsewhere. Of this our readers shall judge.

Hegel of course accepts the Trinity; his whole system is Trinitarian. God, the father, is the eternal *Idee an und für sich*: that is to say, the *Idee* as an *unconditioned* Abstraction. God, the Son, engendered by the Father, is the *Idee* as *Andersseyn*: that is to say, as a *conditioned* Reality.

The *separation* has taken place which, by means of a *negation*, gives the Abstraction real existence. God, the Holy Ghost, is the Identity of the two ; the *negation of the negation* and perfect totality of existence. He is the Consciousness of himself as Spirit : this is the condition of his existence.

God, the Father, was before the World, and created it. That is to say, he existed *an sich*, as the pure *Idee*, before he assumed any reality. He created the World, because it is the essence of his being to create (*es gehört zu seinen Seyn, Wesen, Schöpfer zu seyn*). Did he not create, then would his own existence be incomplete.

The vulgar notion of theologians is that God created the world by an act ; but Hegel says that the creation is not an act, but an eternal moment—not a thing *done*, but a thing perpetually *doing*—God did not *create* the world, he is eternally *creating* it. Attached also to this vulgar notion, is another less precisely but more commonly entertained ; namely, that God having created the world by an act of his will, now lets it develope itself, with no interference of his ; as Göthe somewhere ridicules it, he “sits aloft seeing the world go.” This was not the doctrine of St. Paul, whose pregnant words are, “*In Him* we live, and move, and have our being,” (*ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν, καὶ κινούμεθα, καὶ ἐσμεν*). We live *in* God, not out of him, not simply by him. And this is what Hegel means when he denies that the creation was a single act. Creation was, and is, and ever will be. Creation is the reality of God : it is God passing into activity ; but neither suspended nor exhausted in the act.

This is all that we can here give of his ‘*Philosophy of Religion* ;’ were we to venture further, we should only get ourselves entangled in the thorny

labyrinth of theological problems. Let us pass therefore to his 'History of Philosophy,' which, according to him, is the history of the developement of the *Idee* as intelligence. This developement of thought is nothing more than the various transitions which constitute the *moments* of the absolute Method. All these *moments* are represented in history; so that the 'History of Philosophy' is the reproduction of the 'Logic,' under the forms of intelligence. The succession of these moments gives to each period a particular philosophy; but these various philosophies are, in truth, only parts of the one philosophy. This looks like the Eclecticism of Victor Cousin; and, indeed, Cousin's system is but an awkward imitation of Hegel: but the Frenchman has either misunderstood, or has modified the views of his master.

Historically speaking, there have been but two philosophies: that of Greece and that of Germany. The Greeks conceived Thought under the form of the *Idee*; the moderns have conceived it under the form of *Spirit*. The Greeks of Alexandria arrived at unity; but their unity was only ideal, it existed objectively in thought. The subjective aspect was wanting: the totality knew itself not as subjective and objective. This is the triumph of modern philosophy.

The *moments* have been, briefly, these: I. With Thales and the Eleatics the *Idee* was conceived as pure Being: the One. II. With Plato it was conceived as Universal, Essence, Thought. III. With Aristotle as Conception (*Begriff*). IV. With the Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics, as subjective Conception. V. With the Alexandrians as the totality of Thought. VI. With Descartes as Self-Consciousness. VII. With Fichte as Abso-

lute, *Ego*. VIII. With Schelling as the Identity of Subject and Object.

We close here our exposition of Hegel's tenets; an exposition which we have been forced to give more in his own words than we could have wished; but the plan we adopted with respect to Kant and Fichte would not have been so easy (we doubt if it be possible) with respect to Hegel, whose language *must* be learned, for the majority of his distinctions are only verbal. In Kant and Fichte the thoughts were to be grappled with; in Hegel the form is everything.

We have only touched upon essential points. Those desirous of more intimate acquaintance with the system are referred to the admirable edition of his complete works, published by his disciples, in twenty volumes, 8vo. If this be somewhat too alarming from voluminousness, we can cordially recommend the abridgment by Franz and Hillert (*Hegel's Philosophie in Wörtlichen Auszügen*, Berlin, 1843), where the whole system is given in Hegel's own words, and only his illustrations and minute details are omitted. Michelet's work is useful only for its bibliography. He indicates the various directions taken by Hegel's disciples. Chalybäus is popular, but touches only on a few points. Barchou de Penhoen evidently knows Hegel only at second-hand, and is not always to be trusted. Dr. Ott's work is ill-written, but very useful as an introduction to the study of the works themselves, and has been very useful to us in our exposition. No work of Hegel's has been translated into English; and only his '*Æsthetik*' into French, and that is more an analysis, we believe, than a translation. The '*Philosophy of History*' has been translated into Italian.

TWELFTH EPOCH.

FINAL CRISIS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY,
AND DEFINITIVE ESTABLISHMENT OF POSITIVISM.

CHAP. I. PRESENT STATE OF PHILOSOPHY IN
ENGLAND, GERMANY, AND FRANCE.

CHAP. II. AUGUSTE COMTE.

CHAPTER VI.

PRESENT STATE OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLAND,
GERMANY, AND FRANCE.

SINCE Thomas Brown's 'Lectures,' and Mill's 'Analysis,' no work has appeared either as a continuation of the Scotch psychology, or as a reaction against it, unless we are to reckon Phrenology. Ontology can scarcely have been said to have taken root in England; and psychology has for many years been neglected. This silence of our press is interpreted, in Germany and France, as a proof of our speculative incapacity; and not a few Englishmen echo the cry. But is it true? Can we plausibly accuse that nation of a deficiency in philosophical capacity which produced Hobbes, Glanvil, Locke, Berkeley, Clarke, Hume, Hartley, Bentham, Brown, &c.? which still boasts of John Mill, Sir Wm. Hamilton, Thomas de Quincey, Sir John Herschell, F. Maurice, J. Ferrier, not to mention men less known, but remarkable for subtlety and comprehensiveness? Germany may boast of a greater number, but it cannot show a better list of names than the above.

That there are men of remarkable ability still cultivating Philosophy in England we are assured; they publish little, because there is no public. And why is there no public? Is it because the English mind is incapable of speculation? or is it

not rather because the English mind rejects as frivolous, because useless, all speculation that does not come within the sphere of positive science? It is. Germany and France may style us "incapable"—"shopkeepers"—pursuers of the "practical;" may declare we grovel in the mud because we cannot revel in the sky; it avails nothing: England pursues her steady course, and her sons, as children of the earth, declare they have no wish to leave it for the clouds. In one word, the "*gros bon sens*"—the plain practical reasoning of the English Public pronounces Philosophy unworthy of study; and neglects it. Let steady progress in Positive Science be our glory; Metaphysical speculation we can leave to others.

Whether this contempt be well or ill-founded, let the readers of our History judge. If it be ill-founded, there is one simple remedy: once show the public that the problems of Philosophy are capable of solution—that the inquiry has any practical bearing on the affairs of life—*show* this instead of *asserting* it—and there will be no lack of intelligences ready to devote themselves to it.

As a proof: Phrenology claims its thousands of disciples; and this, because it not only has a practical bearing, but also admits of *verification*. It is true, or it is false; the test is ready, or *seems* so. Hence the acceptance which it finds; and we feel constrained to say, that had it been more carefully matured before it made such bold pretensions, it would not have met with a tithe of the opposition which has been excited by the ignorance, presumption, and quackery of some of its professors. The majority of thinking men seem agreed upon the fundamental principles of phrenology; but they

reject (we think with justice) all the premature attempts at elaborating a doctrine, and applying it. Phrenology, if ever it be constituted as a science, can only be so through a careful inductive process, carried on by men of far greater capacity than those now assuming the office. And we feel little hesitation in saying it is owing to the discredit brought on the science by some of its professors, that eminent thinkers and sober inquirers are averse to own any allegiance to its principles.

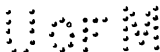
Such as it is, however, Phrenology affords sufficient evidence of the readiness with which any philosophical doctrine that admitted of verification—that did not begin and end in mere argument—would receive in England. Nothing else can ever attract attention. Metaphysics are still cultivated in certain quarters; but generally as a mental gymnastic, or else because the fashion for German Literature has created a desire to know something of German Philosophy. Whatever individual exceptions there may be, it remains indisputable that there is not a School of Philosophy in England; there is not even a doctrine elaborated which would possibly, by any *propagande*, form a School. In other words, Philosophy has ceased to form a portion of the national culture.

In Germany the case is different. There we see some signs of activity. The press is constantly sending forth some philosophical work. The various colleges, all over Germany, are endowed with professorships. Philosophy will give a man his daily bread there—if he be fortunate. To this latter fact we ascribe much of the simulated life which Philosophy exhibits there. Giving bread to some two or three hundred professors and private

teachers—it is always kept alive, at least to *that* extent. Thus far, but not much farther. If we look closely into the state of things since Hegel's death, we shall see nothing but anarchy. The Hegelians are split into diverse factions, waging internecine war. We were present one evening at a meeting of the most illustrious of Hegel's immediate disciples and defenders, when the question of the Origin of Evil was discussed; and the differences manifested were as great as any differences between Catholics and Protestants upon transubstantiation. Fichte's son has produced a new system; of which, however, we can give no account. Schelling has been called from Munich to Berlin, and has undertaken to identify Philosophy with Religion, by making Faith the criterion. Strauss has turned the history of Christ into a myth; Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer have carried this "historical scepticism" to the utmost limit of speculative infidelity. And, to make the anarchy complete, every small professor sets up as a prophet, and either promulgates a doctrine of his own, or throws himself back upon Kant, or Fichte, or Reinhold.

To the English student the activity in Germany appears prodigious. Strictly speaking, it is only the press that is active; and in Germany, where everybody prints everything, activity of the press goes for nothing. Look at the matter a little closer, and you will see how hollow it is. Not one philosophical book in five thousand reaches a second edition! This speaks plainly. And, to make it more striking, we will observe, that Professor Beneke's works on Psychology and Education,*

* 'Lehrbuch der Psychologie als Naturwissenschaft,'



though labouring under the double disadvantage of being opposed *in toto* to everything which the Germans call philosophy, and of proceeding from one occupying no prominent station, have nevertheless a large circle of disciples, and have reached second editions.

Professor Beneke is an honourable exception. For five-and-twenty years he has steadily worked in one direction, and with considerable success. We cannot here appreciate his labours. Suffice it to say, that he makes psychology the basis of all science, and, in his endeavours to construct that basis, he has been led to many profound truths which had escaped the search of his predecessors. We very cordially recommend the two works just named, as also the *Neue Psychologie* (Berlin, 1845).

Professor Beneke is as profoundly convinced of the impotence of ontology as any one in England can be. His efforts have been all towards directing the attention of the public to the Positive Method. Psychology he regards as a science to be pursued on the same inductive principles as the other sciences. But this very peculiarity of position isolates him from his brother professors; so that it is common in Germany to hear philosophers express the most profound contempt for him—a contempt which he repays in kind.

In this contest with established authorities in matters of philosophy he has few supporters amongst professors, though the majority amongst the men of science. One professor, however, we

Berlin, 1845. And 'Erziehungs und Unterrichtslehre.' 1842. The latter was reviewed in the 'Foreign Quarterly' by a very able writer.

must name as an associate in the labour of disabusing the public, and that is O. F. Gruppe, the author of one of the very best books on the Greek Drama,* who in his two separate works has attacked philosophy with remarkable vigour and effect.† The 'Wendepunkt' takes the bull by the horns, and fairly overthrows him. The pretensions of Philosophy being founded upon *à priori* ideas; and *à priori* ideas being assumed as universal and necessary, because they are *à priori*, the task Gruppe has undertaken is to show that they are *not à priori*—that they are all derived from individual *à posteriori* ideas. This he does triumphantly.

It is a mistake to suppose that Philosophy has any existence in Germany, apart from the Universities; the jargon, indeed, of metaphysics infects even the daily newspapers; but so little hold has any doctrine upon the national mind, that if the Professorships were abolished‡ we should soon cease to hear of Philosophy: whereas so long as it remains a *profession*, it will be more or less kept up. Yet compare England in this respect! England, that is said to possess a positive incapacity for Philosophy, because it has a positive contempt for it. Our great thinkers have not been men who made Philosophy a profession by which to gain their livelihood. Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley,

* 'Ariadne: oder die Tragische Kunst der Griechen.' Berlin, 1834.

† 'Antæus. Ein Briefwechsel über speculative Philos. in ihrem Conflict mit Wissenschaft und Sprache.' Berlin, 1831. And the 'Wendepunkt der Philos. in 19ten Jahrhundert.' Berlin, 1834.

‡ In one University—we forget which—we are happy to say the Chair of Philosophy has been abolished; may the others soon follow the example!

Hume, Hartley, were not professors; yet they found audiences composed of thinking men *not* rival professors. Could any German metaphysician now find such an audience? We unhesitatingly answer No. Remember, that we wish to cast no shadow of blame upon Professorships; that men can earn their daily bread while prosecuting their philosophical studies is a subject not of reproach, but of congratulation. Our observation only extends to the fact, that inasmuch as it is a profession there will always be a certain number of professors anxious to magnify its merits, and to increase its influence; and this fact explains the other fact of Germany still manifesting certain activity in a pursuit long since abandoned by England.

In France an analogous situation presents itself. There also is Philosophy a profession. Add to this the important fact of the great majority of French metaphysicians having been writers as admirable for the clearness and attractiveness of their style as the Germans have been remarkable for the reverse. Descartes and Pascal are the fathers of French Prose; after naming these we need only allude to Malebranche, Condillac, Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire, &c., and the force of the remark will be felt on a mere glance at the names of the German writers, Kant, Reinhold, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Oken, Hegel. The French thinkers were *popular*; the Germans intelligible *only* to professors. Hence the superiority of the former as expositors is so great, that the ideas originated in Germany are spread over Europe through the medium of France.

Although the philosophical public in France extends beyond the Universities, and although the activity which philosophy manifests is, on the whole, greater than in Germany (a startling assertion, perhaps, to those who judge by hearsay), a very little acquaintance with the present state of things suffices to show that it has no deep root in the national mind. The main efforts are directed towards the History of Philosophy, towards translations and expositions of various systems—more than towards elaborating any one general doctrine. The speculative thinkers are split into various sects; an useful account of which may be found in Dami-ron's work '*Essai sur la Philosophie en France au XIX^e Siècle.*' We have on a former occasion endeavoured to characterize the leading tendencies of the principal sects.* We then pointed out the mistake (too current) of supposing that modern French Philosophy partook of the spirit of the Encyclopedists: "it may, in its best and latest writers, be characterized as a general reaction against that spirit. It is dogmatical and constructive where that was sceptical and destructive; it is spiritual where that was material; religious when that was opposed to religion. There is doubtless much of what is called infidelity in France; meaning thereby a dissent from ancient forms and received interpretations of religion; but it assumes a different aspect from that of the eighteenth century. The latter was directed against Priesthood; its professed object was the destruction of all Religion, which it stigmatized a Superstition. The present

* '*British and Foreign Review,*' July, 1843. We are not prepared to stand by every opinion there enunciated; but as an historical survey, it contains, in the shape of facts and quotations, some valuable matter.

dissent is directed against literal interpretations of doctrines, against the refusal to enlarge those interpretations in accordance with the wants of the age. It would enlarge, not destroy : it is no longer querulous, flippant, or sarcastic ; but learned, earnest, zealous, above all dogmatic." .

The doctrines of Condillac, after having met with unexampled popularity, were routed from the field by the reaction against the Encyclopedists. This reaction proceeded from various quarters. From the Catholics, with Count Joseph de Maistre and M. de Bonald at their head ; from the *littérateurs*, with Mad. de Staël and Chateaubriand ; and from the philosophers themselves, with Laromiquière and Maine de Biran, who were succeeded by Royer Collard, Jouffroy, and Victor Cousin. The three last mentioned were the warm advocates for the Scotch School. Jouffroy translated Reid and Stewart, Royer Collard and Cousin commented on them. The talents of these professors, aided by the tendency towards any reaction, made the Scotch philosophy quite "the rage" in France. But Victor Cousin's restless activity lead him to the study of Kant :—and the doctrines of the "Königsburg sage" were preached by him with the same ardour as that which he had formerly devoted to the Scotch. As soon as the Parisians began to know something of Kant, M. Cousin started off to Alexandria for a doctrine : he found one in Proclus. He edited Proclus : lectured on him ; borrowed some of his ideas, and would have set him on the throne of Philosophy, had the public been willing. A trip to Germany in 1824 made him acquainted with the modern Proclus—Hegel. On his return to Paris he presented the public with as much of Hegel's doctrines as he could understand. *Hew*

celebrated Eclecticism is nothing but a misconception of Hegel's "History of Philosophy." But as he fences that theory round with several plausible arguments, and as the doctrine itself has made great noise in France, we may briefly state upon what grounds it rests and the fallacy of its application.

All error, M. Cousin repeatedly enforces, is nothing but "an incomplete view of the truth." Upon this definition is based the proposition that "All systems are incomplete views of the reality, set up for complete images of the reality." The conclusion is obvious: "All systems containing a mixture of truth and error have only to be brought together, and then the error would be eliminated by the mere juxtaposition of system with system. The truth or portion of the truth which is in one system would be assimilated with the portions of the truth which are in other systems; and thus the work would be easy enough."

Eclecticism, therefore, means the bringing together of all discovered truths eliminated from their accompanying errors, and out of this body of truths elaborating a doctrine. A great task; but is it practicable? On the definition of error is the system based; by that it must stand or fall.

Now, the definition appears to us altogether untenable. Error is *sometimes* an incomplete view of the truth; but it is not *always*; it is sometimes no view of the truth at all, but a mere divergence from it. When Newton constituted his theory of the laws of attraction, and interposed an ether as the *medium* through which they operated, he had an incomplete view of the truth. But when Descartes developed his theory of vortices he had no view of the truth at all—he was altogether wrong. The phrase "incomplete view" is indeed

so vague, that men who sport with verbal subtleties may justify the theory of Descartes as an incomplete view of the truth; it is, indeed, a *very* incomplete view. At any rate no one will be disposed to assert that the mere juxtaposition of Newton's doctrine with that of Descartes could in any way eliminate the error that is in both.

If therefore *all* systems are not incomplete views of the reality, if all systems do not contain certain portions of the truth—how is the eclectic to decide *which* systems are available for his purpose, which philosophies are to be juxtaposed? This leads to the necessity of a *criterion*. M. Jouffroy tells us that it is an easy matter. We have only to collect all the systems which have ever been produced, have them translated and arranged in their legitimate order, and the truths discovered by each will become organized in one doctrine.

Without stopping to ask what is the legitimate order, and how we are to know it, the student is naturally anxious to learn by what criterion eclecticism proposes to judge and separate truth from error in any system. The inquiry is pertinent. It is easy to bid us be careful in separating the wheat from the chaff, that we may garner it up in the storehouses of the world. Suppose the farmer does not *know* the wheat when he sees it, what criterion do you give him whereby he may judge wheat to be wheat, not chaff? None. The philosopher can only distinguish the truth in two ways: either he knows it already, and then he *has* what he is seeking; or else he knows it by its relation to and accordance with those truths which he is already in possession of. That is to say, he has a criterion in his system: those views which range under it, he accepts as extensions of his knowledge; those

which range beyond its limits he denies to be true.

Suppose the eclectic places in juxtaposition, the two great schools which have always divided the world, viz., that which declares experience to be the source of all knowledge; and that which declares we have a great deal of our knowledge antecedent to and independent of experience. Both of these systems he pronounces to be composed of truth and error. He assumes this; for a little consideration might tell him that it is utterly impossible both should be correct: experience either is, or is not, the sole fountain of knowledge. The difference is as decided as that respecting the motion of the earth, or the motion of the sun. Ptolemy and Copernicus: choose between them; any compromise is impossible; unless you wish to side with the Sizar who, when the question was put, "Does the earth move round the sun or the sun round the earth?" replied, "sometimes one and sometimes the other." He was an eclectic, apparently. Let us, however, for a moment grant that the two schools of psychology are both partly right and partly wrong; we then ask, what criterion has the eclectic whereby he is to distinguish error from truth? He has none; the doctors are silent on the point.

That men derive assistance from others, and that those who went before us discovered many truths, all admit. And there can be no doubt that a juxtaposition and comparison of various doctrines would be of service. Eclecticism, therefore, as a *subsidiary* process is valuable; and has always been practised. M. Cousin, however, converts this subsidiary process into a primary one, and dignifies it with the attributes of a method. In the one sense it is simply that the inquirer consults the

works of his predecessors, and selects from them all that *he* considers true : viz., such portions as confirm, extend, and illustrate his previous opinions ; these opinions constituting his criterion. Let the reader reflect on the pertinacity with which men refuse to admit views which to others are self-evident, because those views are or seem to be opposed to religion, or the reigning doctrine, and he will clearly enough see the nature of this criterion. The history of opinion is crowded with instances of it. M. Cousin, however, does not so understand eclecticism. He says we should admit all systems as containing some truths ; and these truths separate themselves from errors by the mere process of juxtaposition, somewhat in the manner we presume of chemical affinities.—A theory that needs, one would think, no further refutation than a simple statement of its principles.

Eclecticism, ridiculous as a doctrine, has not been without service in directing attention to the history of philosophy. It has roused a spirit of historical inquiry of far more value in our eyes than if it had originated a hundred new doctrines. And indeed if called upon to characterize French philosophy in a word, we should say it was *historical*. However various the doctrines, they have a sort of unity given them by the pretension they all have of being founded on history. The Eclectics, the Catholics, and the Humanitarians all point to the attestation of history in proof of their systems.

Amidst the intellectual anarchy of France there is one system to which we would fain direct the earnest attention of our readers ; we mean the Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, to which the next chapter will be devoted.

CHAPTER 11.

AUGUSTE COMTE.

COMTE is the Bacon of the nineteenth century. Like Bacon he fully sees the causes of our intellectual anarchy, and also sees the cure. His great work, '*Cours de Philosophie Positive*,' (6 vols.) is known to the majority of our eminent scientific men, and is highly prized by them; but we have observed, even amongst those admirers, that in most instances he has rather been dipped into than studied. The chapters relating to science have alone been read; while those more important chapters on social science, to which the former are but preparatory, have been neglected. On the other hand, students of philosophy have often confined their attention solely to the social science, neglecting the introductory volumes: a process really little less rational than for a man to study Euclid by beginning towards the end. Comte's system must be studied, or it had better be left alone; and we beg to assure the reader that however slight a smattering he may have of the various sciences, he may perfectly follow Comte through his exposition, because it is an exposition of the Philosophy of the Sciences, not treatises on them.

Whoever casts his glance at the present intellectual state of Europe, will perceive a great want of *unity*, caused by the absence of any one

doctrine, *general* enough to embrace every variety of ideas, and *positive* enough to carry with it irresistible conviction. Look at the state of religion. Catholicism and Protestantism make one great division; but within the sphere of each we see countless subdivisions; the variety of *sects* is daily increasing. Each religion has remarkable men amongst its members; but each refuses to admit the doctrines of the others. There is, in fact, no one general doctrine capable of embracing Catholics, Protestants, Mahometans, and their subdivisions. Look also at the state of philosophy. There is no one philosophy universally accepted; there are as many philosophies as there are speculative cities, almost as many as there are professors. The dogmas of Germany are held as the dreams of alchemists in England and Scotland; the psychology of Scotland is laughed at in Germany, and neglected in England and France. Besides this general dissidence, we see, in France and Germany at least, great opposition between religion and philosophy openly pronounced, or openly signalized. This opposition is inevitable: it lies in the very nature of philosophy; and although, now as heretofore, many professors eagerly argue that the two are perfectly compatible and accordant, the discordance is, and always must be, apparent.

With respect to general doctrines, then, we find the state of Europe to be this: religions opposed to religions; philosophies opposed to philosophies; and religion and philosophy at war with each other. Such is the anarchy in the higher regions.

In the positive sciences there is less dissidence, but there is the same absence of any general doctrine; each science is on a firm basis, and rapidly

improves ; but a philosophy of science—a positive philosophy is nowhere to be found except in the work of M. Auguste Comte, which comes forward with the express purpose of supplying the deficiency. The *speciality* of scientific men and their incapacity of either producing or accepting any general idea, has long been a matter of complaint ; and this has been one great cause of the continuance of philosophy ; for men of speculative ability saw clearly enough that however exact each science might be in itself, it could only form a part of philosophy. Moreover the evil of speciality is not confined to neglecting the whole for the sake of the parts ; it affects the very highest condition of science, viz., its capability of instructing and directing society.

In the early ages of speculation general views were eagerly sought and easily obtained. As science became rich and complex in materials, various divisions took place ; and one man cultivated one science, another man another. Even then general views were not absent. But as the tide rolled on, discovery succeeding discovery, and new tracks of inquiry leading to vast wildernesses of undiscovered truth, it became necessary for one man to devote himself only to a small fraction of a science : that he pursued, leaving to others the task of bringing his researches under their general head. Such a minute division of labour was necessary for the successful prosecution of minute and laborious researches ; but it ended in making men of science regard *only* the individual parts of science ; the construction of general doctrines was left to philosophers. A fatal error ; for such doctrines could only be truly constructed out of the materials of

science and upon the method of science; whereas the philosophers were ignorant of science—or only superficially acquainted with it—and despised the method. The *Natur-Philosophie* of Schelling and Hegel is a sufficiently striking example of the results of such a procedure.

We come then to this conclusion: in the present state of things the speculative domain is comprised of two very different portions: viz., general ideas and positive sciences. The general ideas are powerless because they are not positive; the positive sciences are powerless because they are not general. The new philosophy which, under the title of positive, M. Comte proposes to create—and the basis of which he has himself laid—is destined to put an end to this anarchy, by presenting a doctrine *positive*, because elaborated from the sciences, and yet possessing all the desired *generality* of metaphysical doctrines, without possessing their vagueness, instability, and inapplicability.

This is a gigantic attempt for one individual; but it has been undertaken by one possessing the thews and sinews of a giant, and the result is astounding. We have no hesitation in recording our conviction that the *Cours de Philosophie Positive* is the greatest work of our century, and will form one of the mighty landmarks in the history of opinion.

The first point upon which our attention must be fixed, in M. Comte's work, is that important law of mental evolution which he has not only discovered, but applied historically. It forms the key-stone of the arch. His object is to construct a positive philosophy,—that is, a doctrine capable of embracing all the sciences, and with them all the problems of

social life,—to which no other doctrine *now* aspires ; for metaphysics have, since the time of Bacon, been separated from physics, and have lost all power over them. If, therefore, we are to have a new Philosophy which is to supply the present deficiencies, we must have one capable of embracing both the *positive* and *social* sciences. The conception of a social science is due to M. Comte. No one before him ever dreamed of treating social problems otherwise than upon theological or metaphysical methods. He first showed how possible—nay, how imperative—it was that social questions should be treated on the same footing with all other scientific questions.* This being his object, he was forced to detect the law of mental evolution before he could advance. This law is the law of historical progression. “The state of the speculative faculties, the character of the propositions assented to, essentially determines the moral and political state of the community, as we have already seen that it determines the physical. Every considerable change historically known to us in the condition of any portion of mankind, has been preceded by a change of proportional extent in the state of their knowledge or in their prevalent beliefs.”†

M. Comte's law may be thus stated :—Every branch of knowledge passes successively through three stages : 1st, the *supernatural*, or fictitious ; 2nd, the *metaphysical*, or abstract ; 3rd, the *positive* or scientific. The first is the necessary point of departure taken by human intelligence ; the second

* See also the last Book of Mill's ‘System of Logic’ for a view of Social Science.

† ‘System of Logic,’ vol. ii. p. 608. The reader should consult the whole chapter.

is merely a stage of transition from the supernatural to the positive; and the third is the fixed and definite condition which knowledge is alone capable of progressive developement.

In the *supernatural* stage, the mind seeks after *causes*; aspires to know the *essences* of things and their modes of operation. It regards all effects as the productions of supernatural agents, whose intervention is the *cause* of all the apparent anomalies and irregularities. Nature is animated by supernatural beings. Every unusual phenomenon is a sign of the pleasure or displeasure of some being adored and propitiated as a God. The lowest condition of this stage, is that of the savages, viz., Fetichism. The highest condition is when one being is substituted for many, as the cause of all phenomena.

In the *metaphysical* stage, which is only a modification of the former, but which is important as a transitional stage, the supernatural agents give place to abstract forces (personified abstractions) supposed to inhere in the various substances, and capable themselves of engendering phenomena. The highest condition of this stage is when all these forces are brought under one general force named Nature.

In the *positive* stage, the mind, convinced of the futility of all inquiry into causes and essences, applies itself to the observation and classification of *laws* which regulate effects; that is to say, the invariable relations of succession and similitude which all things bear to each other. The highest condition of this stage would be, to be able to represent all phenomena as the various particulars of one general view.

Thus in Astronomy we may trace the gradual evolution from Apollo and his chariot, to the Pythagorean ideas of Numbers, Harmonies, and so many other metaphysical abstractions, to the firm basis on which it is now settled: the law of gravitation. So that it is by geometry and dynamics we hope to wrest their secret from the spheres; not by the propitiation of a Sun-God. Thus also in Physics, where thunder was the intervention of Jove, and where metaphysics had introduced Nature's "horror of a void," we seek truth in the regular study of gravitation, electricity, light, &c.

We cannot pursue the illustrations of this law. Its history is the history of mankind. Those critics who have spoken of this law as if it were merely an ingenious *aperçu* cannot have seen its bearing nor can they have duly studied Comte's work. To pretend to judge of such a law by a mere reflection on its statement, without tracing its verification throughout the history of speculation, is as wise as it would be to judge the law of gravitation *à priori*, without waiting to see its application to phenomena. We believe that Comte's law is the fundamental law of mental evolution. It is proved by the experience not of one science only but of all sciences; not of one nation and one epoch, but of all nations and all epochs. Therefore does the diligent perusal of Comte's work become indispensable to those who would form any opinion on his system. The neglect of this has led some of his critics into ludicrous misstatements. They have made objections which he had early anticipated and refuted. They have denied his facts, because they have not learned that all history confirms these facts. They have mistaken his *law*

for a mere *hypothesis*. It is now some years since we first read the work ; and since that time we have met with nothing but confirmations of its truth.

Although the verification of this law exceeds our limits, we may fitly adduce Comte's arguments in its favour. All are agreed, in these days, that real knowledge must be founded on the observation of *facts*. Hence contempt of mere theories. But no science could have its origin in simple observation ; for if, on the one hand, all positive theories must be founded on observation, so, on the other, it is equally necessary to have some sort of theory before we address ourselves to the task of steady observation. If, in contemplating phenomena, we do not connect them with some principle, it would not only be impossible for us to combine our isolated observations, and consequently to draw any benefit from them ; but we should also be unable even to retain them, and most frequently the important facts would remain unperceived. We are consequently forced to theorize. A theory is necessary to observation, and a correct theory to correct observation.

This double necessity imposed upon the mind—of observation for the formation of a theory, and of a theory for the practice of observation—would have caused it to move in a circle, if nature had not fortunately provided an outlet in the spontaneous activity of the mind. This activity causes it to begin by assuming a cause, which it seeks out of nature, *i. e.*, supernatural. As man is conscious that he acts according as he wills, so he naturally concludes that everything acts in accordance with some superior will. Hence Fetichism, which is nothing but the endowment of inanimate things with life

and volition. This is the logical necessity for the supernatural stage: the mind commences with the unknowable; it has first to learn its impotence, to learn the limits of its range before it can content itself with the knowable.*

The metaphysical stage is equally important as transitive. The supernatural and positive stages are so widely opposed as to require intermediate notions to bridge over the chasm. In substituting an *entity inseparable from phenomena* for a *supernatural agent, through whose will* these phenomena were produced, the mind was habituated to consider only the phenomena themselves. This was a most important condition. The result was, that the ideas of these metaphysical entities gradually faded, and were lost in the mere abstract names of the phenomena.

The positive stage was now possible. The mind having ceased to interpose either supernatural agents or metaphysical entities between the phenomena and their production, attended solely to the phenomena themselves. These it reduced to *laws*; in other words, it arranged them according to their invariable relations of similitude and succession. The search after essences and causes was renounced. The pretension to absolute knowledge was set aside. The discovery of laws became the great object of mankind.

Remember that although every branch of knowledge must pass through these three stages, in obedience to the law of evolution, nevertheless the progress is not strictly chronological. Some sciences are more rapid in their evolution than others; some

* See the Introd. to the First Series.

individuals pass through these evolutions more quickly than others ; so also of nations. The present intellectual anarchy results from that difference ; some sciences being in the positive, some in the supernatural, and some in the metaphysical stage : and this is further to be subdivided into individual differences ; for in a science which, on the whole, may fairly be admitted as being positive, there will be found some cultivators still in the metaphysical stage. Astronomy is now in so positive a condition, that we need nothing but the laws of dynamics and gravitation to explain all celestial phenomena ; and this explanation we know to be correct, as far as anything can be known, because we can predict the return of a comet with the nicest accuracy, or can enable the mariner to discover his latitude and find his way amidst the "waste of waters."* This is a positive science. But so far is meteorology from such a condition, that prayers for dry or rainy weather are still offered up in churches ; whereas if once the *laws* of these phenomena were traced, there would no more be prayers for rain than for the sun to rise at midnight. Remark also that while in the present day no natural philosopher is insane enough to busy himself with the attempt to discover the *cause* of attraction, thousands are busy in the attempt to discover the *cause* of life and the *essence* of mind ! This difference characterizes positive and metaphysical sciences. The one is content with a general *fact*, that "the operation of attraction is inversely as the square of the distance ;" this being sufficient for all scientific purposes, because enabling us to

* Homer.

predict with unerring certainty the results of that operation. The metaphysician or metaphysical physiologist, on the contrary, is more occupied with *guessing* at the causes of life than in observing and classifying vital phenomena with a view to detect their laws of operation. First he guesses it to be what he calls a "vital principle"—a mysterious entity residing in the frame, and capable of engendering phenomena. He then proceeds to guess at the nature or essence of this principle, and pronounces it "electricity," or "nervous fluid," or "chemical affinity." Thus he heaps hypothesis upon hypothesis, and clouds the subject from his view.

The closer we examine the present condition of the sciences, the more we shall be struck with the anarchy above indicated. We shall find one science in a perfectly positive stage (Physics), another in the metaphysical stage (Biology, or Electricity), a third in the supernatural stage (Sociology). Nor is this all. The same varieties will be found to co-exist in the same individual mind. The same man who in physics may be said to have arrived at the positive stage, and recognises no other object of inquiry than the *laws* of phenomena, will be found still a slave to the metaphysical stage in Biology, and endeavouring to detect the *cause* of life; and so little emancipated from the supernatural stage in Sociology, that if you talk to him of the *possibility* of a science of history, or a social science, he will laugh at you as a "theorizer." So vicious is our philosophical education! So imperfect the conception of a scientific Method! Well might Shelley exclaim—

How green is this grey world!

The present condition of science, therefore, exhibits three Methods instead of one : hence the anarchy. To remedy the evil all differences must cease : one Method must preside. Auguste Comte was the first to point out the fact, and to suggest the cure ; and it will render his name immortal. So long as the supernatural explanation of phenomena was universally accepted, so long was there unity of thought, because one general principle was applied to *all* facts. The same may be said of the metaphysical stage, though in a less degree, because it was never universally accepted ; it was in advance of the supernatural, but before it could attain universal recognition, the positive stage had already begun. When the positive method is universally accepted—and the day we hope is not far distant, at least among the élite of humanity—then shall we again have unity of thought, then shall we again have one general doctrine, powerful because general. That the positive Method is the only Method adapted to human capacity, the only one on which truth can be found is easily proved : on it alone can *prevision* of phenomena depend. Prevision is the characteristic and the test of knowledge. If you can predict certain results and they occur as you predicted, then are you assured that your knowledge is correct. If the wind blows according to the will of Boreas, we may, indeed, *propitiate* his favour, but we cannot *calculate* upon it. We can have no certain knowledge whether the wind will blow or not. If, on the other hand, it is subject to laws, like everything else, once discover these laws, and men will predict concerning it as they predict concerning other matters. “ Even the wind and rain,” to use the language of

one of our most authoritative writers, "which in common speech are the types of uncertainty and change, obey laws as fixed as those of the sun and moon; and already, as regards many parts of the earth, man can foretel them without fear of being deceived. He plans his voyages to suit the coming monsoons, and prepares against the floods of the rainy seasons."* If one other argument be needed, we would simply refer to the gradual and progressive improvement which has always taken place in every department of inquiry conducted upon the positive Method—and with a success in exact proportion to its rigorous employment of that Method—contrasted with the *circular* movement of Philosophy, which is just as far from a solution of any one of its problems as it was five thousand years ago; the only truths that it can be said to have acquired are a few psychological truths, and these it owes to the positive Method! †

It is obvious that our limits do not allow of our presenting even the meagrest outline of a system which, embracing all the sciences, and attaching thereto the new science of society, presents a complete philosophy. We have indicated the presiding spirit, and have briefly stated the important law of

* Dr. Arnott's 'Elements of Physics.' Fifth ed., vol. i. p. 13. A work stamped with such universal approbation as to render superfluous any tribute of our own; but we cannot refrain from pointing to it as, perhaps, the most perfect specimen of positive philosophy this country has produced. It is, indeed, one of the many obligations which this great and generous benefactor of his species has laid us under: one stone of the monument he has raised for our reverential admiration.

† See the Introduction to First Series, p. 18—20.

mental evolution on which his system is grounded. We must further observe that the mere conception of a social science, to be constituted on the same method as the other sciences, is no ordinary achievement; but Comte has done more: he has laid the basis of the science; he has created the philosophy of history. The various attempts at founding a philosophy of history from Vico to Herder, and from Hegel to Michelet, are so many testimonies of the restless discontent occasioned by the urgent demand for one, and the insufficiency of prevalent conceptions. History is still the hieroglyphic monument of our past life. We must decipher it, if we would understand the present and predict the future. The key had to be found when Comte came forward. The writing was there before us, abundant, instructive, if we could but have read it; unfortunately we could not. And when we see so great a writer as Niebuhr unable to give any other explanation of the stability and progress of the Roman people than that of destiny—unable to read any signs but those of the “finger of God”—it is high time to bestir ourselves to rid the world of this *supernatural* method of explaining facts. To the fifth and sixth volumes of M. Comte’s works we earnestly refer the reader who may be desirous of gaining the key to decipher the past.

We must not close this inadequate account of the positive philosophy without noticing Comte’s profound and luminous classification of the sciences. It is so simple and so striking that, when once it has been stated, the mind feels some difficulty in conceiving any other possible.* The principle

* This made a valued friend declare, in an article in ‘Blackwood,’ that it was just such a classification as would

adopted by him is this :—The problem, to be solved is the dependence of the sciences upon each other. This dependence can only result from that of the corresponding phenomena. In considering these, it is easy to class them in a small number of natural categories, so disposed that the rational study of each successive category should be founded on the knowledge of the principal laws of the preceding category. The order of their dependence is determined by the degree of *simplicity* or *generality* of the phenomena. It is evident that the most simple phenomena—those which are least mixed up with others—are the most general; for that which is observed in the greatest number of circumstances is the most independent of the various particulars of those circumstances. The principle therefore to be adopted is this: we must commence with the study of the most simple or general phenomena, and proceed successively to the most complex and particular.

A distinction is to be made between the two classes of phenomena which are manifested by *in-organized bodies* and by *organized bodies*. The phenomena of the latter are obviously more *complex* than those of the former: they greatly depend upon inorganized bodies, while these in no way depend upon organized bodies. Organized bodies

naturally arise in any reflective mind on a review of the subject. We demur; for, not to refer to the abortive attempts at classification made by Bacon, D'Alembert, and Stewart, we need only refer to the *chances* of any one being correct. There are, including Mathematics, six sciences; now six objects admit of 720 different dispositions; consequently 720 classifications are possible, and the problem is to choose that which is necessarily unique!

manifest *all* the phenomena of the inorganized, whether chemical or mechanical; but they *also* manifest the phenomena named *vital*, which are never manifested by inorganized bodies.

In the study of *inorganic physics* we commence by separating the general phenomena of the universe from the less general terrestrial phenomena. Thus we have, first, *celestial physics*, or astronomy, whether geometrical or mechanical; secondly, *terrestrial physics*. The phenomena of astronomy being the most general, the most simple, and the most abstract of all, we must begin our study with them. Their laws influence all other terrestrial phenomena, of which they are essentially independent. In all terrestrial physics universal gravitation is a condition; and so the simple movement of a body, if we would consider *all* the determinating conditions, is a subject of greater *complexity* than any astronomical question.

Terrestrial physics is also divided into two classes: *mechanics* and *chemistry*. Chemistry rightly conceived, presupposes a knowledge of mechanics: for all chemical phenomena are more complex than those of mechanics and depend on them in great part: whereas they have no influence on them. All chemical action is subject to the influence of weight, heat, &c., and must therefore be treated after them.

Organic physics requires a similar division into *physiology* and *social science*. The phenomena relating to mankind are obviously more complex than those relating to the individual man, and depend upon them. In all social questions we see the Influence of physiological laws of the individual; and we see also something peculiar, not physiolo-

gical, which modifies the effects of these laws, and which results from the action of *individuals on each other*, curiously complicated by the action of each generation on its successor. It would be manifestly as impossible to treat the study of the collective species as a pure deduction from the study of the individual, as it would be to treat physiology as a pure deduction from chemistry.

The positive philosophy, therefore, resolves itself into five fundamental sciences, of which the succession is determined by a necessary and invariable subordination founded on a comparison of corresponding phenomena. The first (astronomy) considers the most general, simple, and abstract phenomena—those farthest removed from humanity: they influence all others, but are not influenced by them. The last (sociology) considers the most particular, complex, and concrete phenomena; those most directly interesting to man; they depend more or less upon all the preceding classes, without exercising on the latter the slightest influence. Between these two extremes the degrees of speciality and of complication of phenomena gradually augment according to their successive dependence.

Such is Comte's classification reduced to its simplest terms: a remarkable evidence of the profound and luminous intellect which originated it. A striking proof both of the correctness of this classification and of the truth of his great law of mental evolution is seen in the fact that the history of the sciences teaches us how they all developed themselves into the positive stage precisely in their successive order of dependence. Astronomy was the *first* to become positive; Sociology is the *last*;

between these extremes have come physics, chemistry, and biology, in successive developement.

We must cease. Anxious, as we are, that Comte's philosophy should occupy the serious attention of every one who aspires to the title of philosopher, we must nevertheless declare that Comte's works are not calculated to be popular. Six stout volumes are enough to make the student pause ere he begin; and the length of the journey is not lightened by any graces of style. The truth must be told: Comte is a wordy writer; but he is not obscure, coins no terminology to bewilder the reader, repeats what he says in various ways, so as to ensure intelligibility at the expense of some *ennui*. The course we should recommend the student to pursue is first to read M. Littré's pamphlet *De la Philosophie Positive**—a masterly exposition of the object and tendencies of positivism, which may be purchased for a couple of shillings. Having read that, he will be in a condition to attack with sufficient eagerness the *Cours de Philosophie Positive* by the master; which he should follow up with the *Traité de l'Astronomie Populaire*, also by Comte, in one volume. We are confident he will then be grateful to us for the advice.

* Paris, chez Ladrangé, 1845.

CONCLUSION.

MODERN philosophy opens with a method—Bacon ; and ends with a method—Comte ; and in each case this method leads to positive science, and sets metaphysics aside. Within these limits we have witnessed various efforts to solve the problems of Philosophy ; and all those efforts have ended in scepticism.

There are two characteristics of Modern Philosophy which may here be briefly touched on. The first is the progressive developement of positive science, which in ancient speculations occupied the subordinate rank, and which now occupies the highest. The second is the reproduction of all the questions which agitated the Greeks, and that too in a similar course of development. Not only are the questions similar, but their evolutions are so.

After the Eleatics had vexed the problems of existence to no purpose, there came Democritus, Anaxagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, who endeavoured to settle the problems of the nature and origin of human knowledge. So, in modern times, after Descartes and Spinoza came Hobbes, Locke, Leibnitz, &c. The ancient researches into the origin of knowledge ended in the Sceptics, the Stoics, and the New Academy : that is to say, in Scepticism, Common Sense, and Scepticism again. The modern researches ended in Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and Kant : that is, in Idealism, Scepticism, Common Sense, and Scepticism again. These inquiries terminating thus fruitlessly, a new and desperate spring was made in Alexandria : reason was given up for ecstasy ; this resolved philosophy into religion.

In Germany a similar spectacle presents itself; and Schelling has, in his final stage, identified philosophy with religion. Thus has philosophy completed its circle, and we are left in this nineteenth century precisely at the same point at which we were in the fifth!

Observe, however—and the fact is full of significance,—how, in the course of speculation, those questions which were susceptible of *positive* treatment, gradually acquired strength and development. If we are as far removed from a solution of any ontological problem as we were in the days of Proclus, we are not nearly so ignorant of the laws of mental operation. Psychology is not a science yet; but it boasts of some indisputable truths. Although much remains to do, much also has been done; and we believe that it will one day rank as a positive science.

Modern philosophy staked its pretensions on the one question: *Have we any ideas independent of experience?* This was asking, in other words, *Have we any organum of philosophy?*

The answer always ends in a negative. If any one, therefore, remain unshaken by the accumulated proofs this History affords of the impossibility of philosophy, let him distinctly bear in mind that the first problem he must solve is, *Have we ideas independent of experience?* Let him solve that ere he begins to speculate.

And now, reader, our task is done.

THE END.

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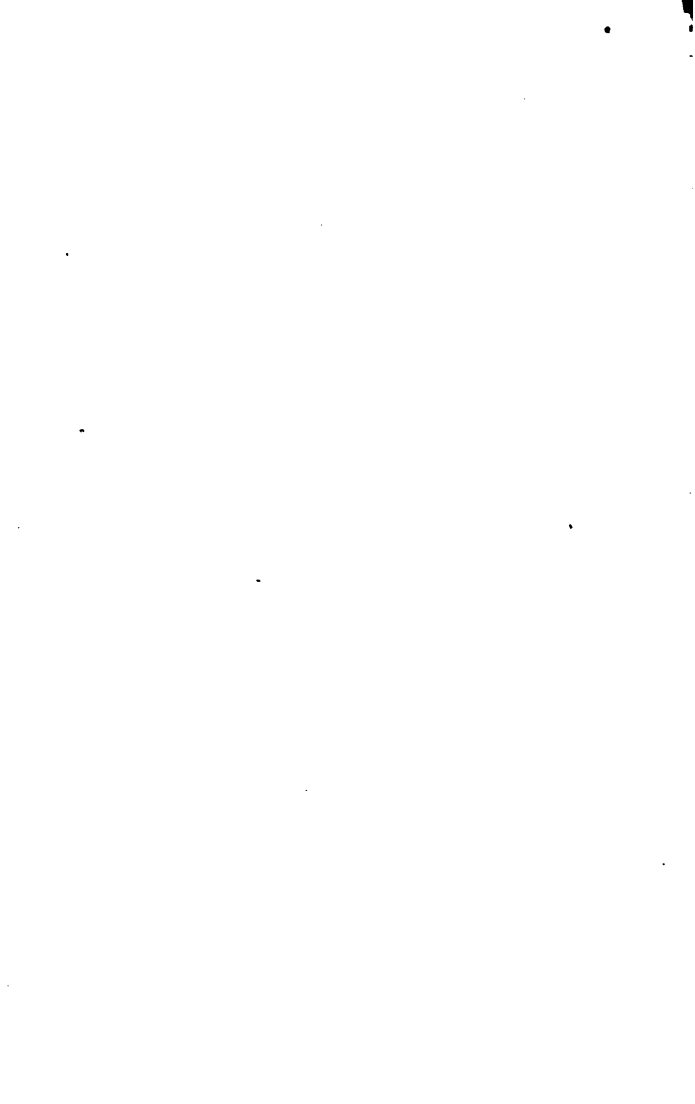
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